Hafa Adai!

FAM tour participants praise CNMI's preparedness. PAGE 3
Micronesia's president says he mandated vaccines to protect. PAGE 7

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Pagan alert level upgraded

The U.S. Geological Survey upgraded the Aviation Color Code/Volcano Alert Level for Pagan Volcano to ORANGE/WATCH yesterday morning following the observation of low-level emissions from the volcano for most of Sept. 1, 2021.

» USGS increases alert level for Pagan Volcano to ORANGE/WATCH

After a brief pause in the emissions, a continuous low-level gas and ash plume extending 350 nautical miles from Pagan Volcano was observed in satellite images from yesterday morning indicating that activity is continuing.

Under the USGS alert-level system for volcanic activity, ORANGE/WATCH means the volcano is exhibiting heightened or escalating unrest with increased potential of eruption (timeframe uncer-

See PAGAN on Page 4

FILING OF CANDIDACY

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Grace "Pitu" Sablan Vaiagae files her candidacy under the CNMI Republican Party's banner before the Commonwealth Election Commission in Susupe yesterday afternoon for the Oct. 16 special election for House of Representatives Precinct 3 seat that was left vacant after the passing of her brother-in-law, representative Ivan Alafanso Blanco. Also in the photo are Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Vaiagae's sister, Carmen Blanco, some family members and supporters.

See story on Page 4

ARPA funds bring people back to work, stimulate local economy

TOGETHER, WE CAN

By MIKE SABLAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Mike Sablan is vice president of Triple J Enterprises, Inc. and chairperson of the Domestic Policy and Recovery Committee of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisers. As an advisory council for Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, the GCEA's mission is to improve the quality of life in the Marianas for all residents.

We've seen positive development in our economy and labor force in the past months. People are queueing in stores to use their stimulus cards, local businesses are recalling back their workers or giving them extra hours to cater to the increase in business activity, while government agencies have also restored their 80-hour work schedule and some employers

See TOGETHER on Page 4

Guam posts 150th COVID death

» 45 in Guam hospitalized for COVID-19

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Guam reported late Wednesday night its 150th COVID-related fatality, an unvaccinated 75-year-old male without any reported underlying health conditions who had tested positive for COVID-19.

According to the same Joint Information Center release Wednesday night, 45 people in Guam have been hospitalized for COVID-19, with 26 of the 45 being unvaccinated.

The JIC reported that

See GUAM on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:39pm, Sept. 2, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated:	78.7%
Days since last community transmission	163

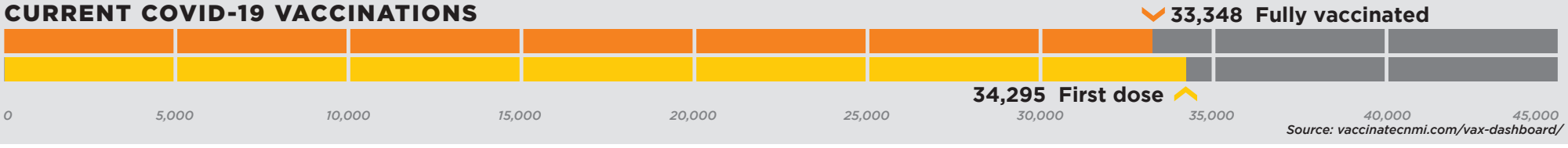
Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	29,498
Fully Vaccinated:	28,335
Moderna	
Initiated:	4,797
Fully Vaccinated:	4,253
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	760

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	10,740	169	10,909
Recovered	8,995	1	8,996
Active	1,594	169	1,763
Deaths	150	0	150

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	243	0	243
Traced via Travel Screening	206	0	206
Traced via Community Screening	37	0	37
Deaths	2	0	2

Source: Joint Information Center – Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

LOCAL
The Saipan Chamber of Commerce welcomes Pacific Rim as its latest member.

PAGE 5

BUSINESS
United Airlines' MileagePlus members can help in the Afghanistan relief effort.

PAGE 11

NATION
Louisiana shows small signs of progress amid the task of repairing the damage wrought by Hurricane Ida.

PAGE 12

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

9/11 commemoration event starts Saturday

The Field of Heroes: We Will Never Forget will kick off the CNMI-wide commemoration event for 9/11 this Saturday, Sept. 4, with around 500 U.S. flags to be displayed at the American Memorial Park.

"TanHoldings and the Tan Siu Lin Foundation are honored to once again hold The Field of Heroes to remember the brave people who risked and lost their own lives saving others' on that fateful day, and to also recognize our community heroes for their decision to continue to serve and say 'yes' to the call of duty," said Catherine Attao-Toves, TanHoldings vice president for corporate affairs and human resources.

Public and private agencies, as well as individuals, are welcome to sponsor flags in honor or memory of their heroes. Flags will be on display at the AMP from Sept. 4 to 30, while Tinian will have them from Sept. 7 to 17 at the Tinian Veterans Memorial Park, and Rota from Sept. 9 to Nov. 12 at the Corporal Joe G. Charfauros Jr. Rota Veterans Memorial Park.

Each island also plans to have other activities to commemorate the 20th anniversary of 9/11. On Saipan, organizers are working with the Department of Public Safety for a motorcade on Sept. 11, while Rota will do the same on Sept. 17. On Tinian, there will be roadside waving on Sept. 10 along Route 201, while Tinian Mayor Edwin Aldan will deliver a commemorative video message.

Attao-Toves said all these activities will be held to also recognize the people who are keeping the CNMI safe amid the continued threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As we continue to fight the war on terrorism, we are also battling a pandemic. Our strength and resiliency have been tested by one disaster after another, but throughout all these difficult situations, our Marianas stand strong. Leading our community's spirit of strength is our community heroes, our first responders, law enforcement officers, military, and veterans," Attao-Toves said.

Commemorative shirts and flags will be available on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan. On Tinian, one can avail of a shirt for a donation of $10, while for a donation of $20, one can sponsor a flag for their chosen hero. On Saipan, a $10 donation will get one a commemorative shirt and flag sponsorship (one flag, one hero name). Details of the donation drive on Rota will be announced later. All proceeds from The Field of Heroes: We Will Never Forget will be donated to the Community Heroes Program of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council.

For more information, contact Attao-Toves at 235-0561, Ext. 116 or email her at catherine_attao@tanholdings.com or call Rina Robles at 235-0516, Ext. 118. ***(PR)***

Man who beat parents sentenced to 72 hours in prison

A man who was arrested for beating his adoptive father and mother for no reason has pleaded guilty before the Superior Court and was sentenced to 72 hours in prison.

During a change of plea hearing yesterday, In Won Hwang, 21, entered a plea of guilty for one count of assault and battery involving domestic violence before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho.

In exchange, the other charges against him—senior citizen physical abuse, disturbing the peace, false arrest, and vandalism—were dropped.

Camacho sentenced Hwang to 72-hour imprisonment, with credit for72 hours of time served. He was then released from the Department of Corrections following his change of plea hearing.

According to court documents, the 77-year-old man and his 69-year-old wife called the police after Hwang assaulted him last Aug. 23. The couple said Hwang did not give any reason why he did these things and he was not visibly drunk. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

Torres OKs administrative leave after 12pm today for 'non-critical' govt employees

In the spirit of the upcoming Labor Day weekend, the Office of the Governor announced yesterday that Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios have authorized the grant of administrative leave after noon today for the CNMI's "non-critical" government employees.

In yesterday's announcement, Torres describes Labor Day as an annual celebration of the social and economic achievements of American workers. This year in the CNMI, "we recognize the work and accomplishments of all our essential workers—both in the public and private sectors—who have contributed to the safety of our community during this pandemic."

Torres further lauds the CNMI's front-liners in the announcement. "It takes a home, a village, an island, and one Marianas to keep our closely-knit community safe, and we did that together against all odds. This weekend, we celebrate our front-liners, doctors, nurses, our COVID-19 Task Force, law enforcement officers, firefighters, bus drivers, and our government employees who do good work every day for our islands to keep us safe from disease and to rebuild our economy," said Torres. ***(Joshua Santos)***

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FAM tour participants praise CNMI's preparedness

The CNMI has received nothing but praise from the familiarization tour participants who came to the CNMI back in July to experience firsthand the wonders the CNMI has to offer interested Travel Bubble participants.

The FAM tour, which concluded last month, was organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority as a sort of test run for the CNMI-South Korean Travel Bubble that was launched shortly after. The tour consisted of representatives of tour agencies, representatives of South Korean media, heads of airlines that service the CNMI, and social media influencers.

Most of the FAM tour participants shared the same opinion after their over two-week trip to CNMI: They felt safe despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In summing up his experience in the CNMI, Lee Jinseok of Naeil Tour found Saipan to be safe and clean. "Saipan is wonderful. It's safe and clean, this is how I describe it from my experience. When I get back to Korea, I will promote the CNMI to all the Koreans I know. Saipan is safe and is such an uninfected and clean region," he said.

Kim Jaewook, Hana Tour department head, echoed Jinseok, saying that if there was anything that stuck with him after his experience, it would have to be how clean the CNMI was.

"We, travel agencies, will do our best to promote the CNMI so that the support from the CNMI is not in vain," he said.

Ko Kyungpyo, Jeju Air director, said he was pleasantly surprised at how smooth the quarantine protocols were, ensuring both the tourists' and the CNMI community's safety. The warm welcome they received from the CNMI community was also another pleasant surprise for him.

"I was surprised here in the CNMI for two reasons: the first thing is the systemized quarantine protocols from Saipan International Airport to the hybrid quarantine hotel, and second thing is the warm greeting and welcoming from the CNMI community. We operated three daily flights before the pandemic. Jeju Air will do our best to promote the CNMI so that we can return to two daily flights or three daily flights eventually," he said.

Kim Kyongtae, Asiana Airlines team leader, shared that, despite his doubts at first, he now has full confidence in the CNMI's safety protocols.

"Before I came to Saipan, I doubted the Travel Bubble, but now, I have full confidence with the facilities at the airport, the quarantine protocols, and the preventive and precautionary measures implemented in the CNMI. I am convinced that I could send enough tourists. The airline will also work hard to promote the CNMI to resume tourism," he said.

Kim Hyungyi, T'Way Air managing director, said the FAM tour was a great opportunity for him to experience how well the CNMI prepared for the Travel Bubble and the CNMI did not disappoint.

"This was a great opportunity for myself to see how well the CNMI prepared, especially in terms of quarantine. Saipan is one of my favorite islands for its beautiful sky, crystal blue and clear water, and diverse activities. As an airline company, we will take the responsibility to [ensure] safe operations and do our best to bring more Korean travelers to the beautiful Saipan," he said.

Meanwhile, TTL News journalist Jeong Yeonbi said it was a great honor to experience how well prepared the CNMI was when welcoming tourists in the midst of COVID-19.

"It was a great honor to be here and have experienced the well-developed and prepared preventive measures in the CNMI from this FAM tour. On behalf of the media team, we will deliver articles on the high-quality measures, preparation standards, and protocols to the Korean audience. Through those articles, we will try our best to provide information about the CNMI and those who have not yet experienced Marianas as the safest destination in the world," she said.

Han Seongmin, a social media influencer, said she is excited to introduce the CNMI to all her followers. "It's been two years since we stopped traveling so I was very excited. I'll do my best to introduce the Marianas as one of the safest destinations to all my followers," she said.

The Travel Bubble program will end in December. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

House JGO Committee's Torres probe is postponed temporarily

The House of Representatives' Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee has temporarily postponed its investigation on Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' expenditures of public funds and travels.

JGO chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) said she decided to postpone the hearing scheduled for this week because she is not feeling well.

Babauta, who is on sick leave this week, is hoping to resume the hearing next week.

Three witnesses—Boating Safety officer Kevin Aldan, and police officers Flora Aguon and Jhaneeka Atalig—were supposed to testify this week.

Aguon and Atalig are part of the personal security details of first lady Diann T. Torres.

The JGO recently approved subpoenas for Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Department of Public Safety Commissioner Robert A. Guerrero, and several others, including Aldan, Aguon, and Atalig, that will require them to testify at the hearings.

Babauta said the date of the witnesses' testimony would be subject to the availability of the House chamber and the JGO members' schedules.

The JGO also agreed to subpoena Diann Torres and Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Gary P. Camacho.

The subpoena will also ask Ralph Torres, Palacios, Diann Torres, and Camacho to produce certain documents.

During three hearing days last week, two witnesses—Police Sgt. Adrian T. Mendiola and Police Lt. Henry Emery Kaipat—completed their testimonies. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

DYS reopening Tanapag Youth Center in early October

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Division of Youth Services is working on reopening the Tanapag Youth Center, according to Vivian Sablan, director of youth services, during DYS' guest appearance on the KKMP radio last Tuesday. The center's reopening and an open house event at the center is slated for early October.

Joining Sablan on the radio Tuesday was Jennifer Tanaka, supervisor for DYS' Family and Youth Enhancement Program, plus other DYS staff.

Sablan said that DYS is a "couple weeks" from finalizing a "rehabilitation and expansion project" that, once completed, will allow the Tanapag Youth Center to offer services similar to what is currently being provided at the Kagman Community Center through DYS' Family & Youth Enhancement Program.

Currently, children can avail of an after-school program at the Kagman Community Center, plus programs focused on anger management, life skills, and avoiding substance abuse. For parents, DYS offers various parenting education services.

As for staffing at the Tanapag Youth Center once it reopens, Sablan said that DYS recently recruited four trained children's program volunteers who will be involved with the children's services provided through the FYEP and will aid in transporting DYS clients. Sablan added that one volunteer was recruited on Rota, and Tanaka added that two volunteers were recruited on Tinian.

In a phone call with Sablan on Wednesday, she said the reopening of the Tanapag Youth Center was made possible through a $200,000 Community Development Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that DYS applied for through the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. Sablan also said that reopening the center was "a two-year project in the making," and that the reopening project included building a new classroom and revamping existing parts of the center, allowing for many more programs to take place simultaneously.

Sablan said that she and DYS are "very excited" for the children and parents in the Tanapag/San Roque/As Matuis area, and clarified that the Tanapag Youth Center, like the Kagman Community Center right now, will be open to the public.

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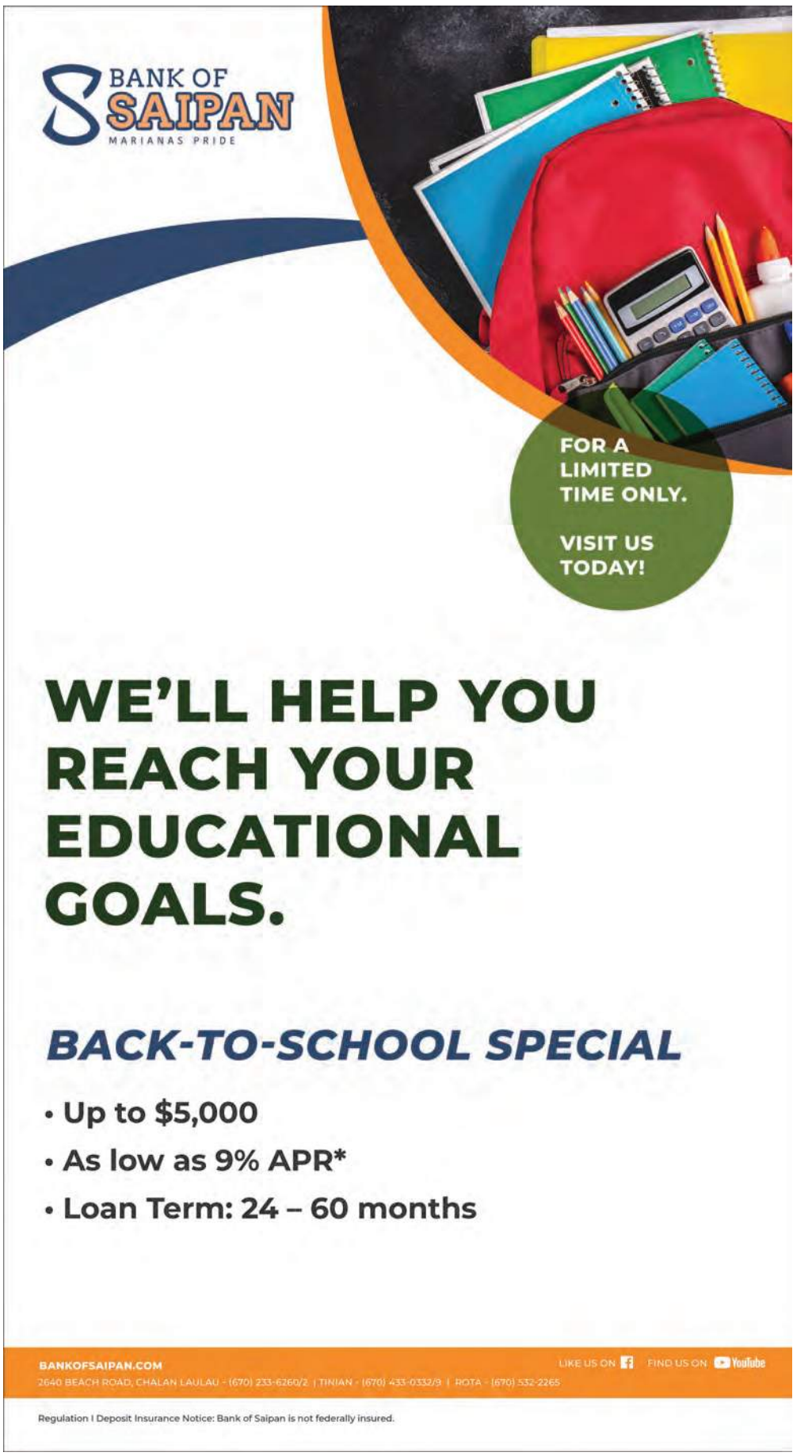
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GOP's Grace Sablan Vaiagae files candidacy for special election

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Grace "Pitu" Sablan Vaiagae filed her candidacy under the CNMI Republican Party's banner before the Commonwealth Election Commission in Susupe yesterday afternoon for the special election being held to fill the Precinct 3 seat that became vacant after her brother-in-law, former representative Ivan Alafanso Blanco, passed away last July.

"I just want to serve the constituents of Precinct. 3. I'm just here to serve," said the 44-year-old Vaiagae in an interview.

Vaiagae was accompanied by her sister, Carmen Blanco, and other family members, friends, and supporters when she filed her nominating petition and candidacy documents. Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres, some Cabinet members, and GOP officials and members came to support her.

When asked why people should vote for her, Vaiagae said she is an indigenous person from Saipan, born and raised here, and has a solid history of community service and a great background in her interactions with people as a counselor. She said has worked with different agencies, even with law enforcement, and is experienced in working with people who are marginalized or underserved.

"I've been out there and exposed to…some of the social issues and concerns that may be impacting our elderly, the *man'amko*, the youth, our children, and persons in recovery," she said.

Vaiagae said that when went off island to be educated and be in her field of expertise, she saw there were so many things happening on island that she could help with after she came back.

She said she was away from the CNMI for more than 10 years and she came back, thinking of wanting to serve the people.

"So coming back…I saw what my island needed. And I want to serve and I've been doing that since 2004," she said.

Vaiagae said she wants to take the next step because she has been out there interacting and serving people. She wants now to introduce legislations, work with lawmakers, work with the Legislature, and work with the government so that they can impact the community in a way where its from a mother's point of view, from a sister's point of view, from a clinician's point of view.

"It's coming from someone who has been away from home for a while and came back and…wanting to see a better development for the island," she said.

Vaiagae is currently an independent contractor who provides consultation services and develops programs for non-profit organizations for substance abuse, domestic violence, and sexual assault.

She obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Guam. She then pursued her master's degree while working as a therapist.

Torres said it is a great honor to have Vaiagae under the GOP banner. He said he knows that their candidate will bring good assistance, not just to Precinct 3 but also to the entire CNMI.

The governor said that, with her background, Vaiagae definitely cares for the community.

He said she shared that she wants to be very proactive on road and other community projects.

"So we're very excited…I ask the whole community, our people from Precinct 3, everyone in the CNMI or those that have families in Precinct 3 to give Grace the opportunity and the blessing to represent the people of Precinct 3 as well as the CNMI," Torres said.

Former Commonwealth Utilities Corp. budget officer Corina L. Magofna is going to file her candidacy under the NMI Democratic Party today, Friday, at 2pm.

NMTI board to activate nomination committee to fill board vacancies

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Technical Institute's board of trustees recently activated a nomination committee to seek out candidates to fill two board vacancies, according to NMTI interim chief executive officer Jodina Attao. NMTI is aiming to install a business representative from Saipan and a Tinian representative into its board.

In an interview with Attao yesterday, she said that former trustee Richard Kautz Jr. from Saipan resigned on Aug. 19 and that former Tinian representative and trustee Ray Pangelinan resigned recently as well. Attao said that she and the board extend their gratitude to Kautz and Pangelinan for their time and commitment to NMTI.

This week, NMTI made public its board vacancies and welcomed applications before today, Sept. 3. As of yesterday afternoon, Attao said that NMTI had not received any letters of interest yet, and as such the board's nomination committee will now actively seek candidates for these vacancies.

"What the nomination committee is going to do is come up with a list of names to present to the governor. Prior to presenting to [Gov. Ralph DLG Torres], they will contact [prospects to gauge their interest]. If interested, we would ask them for their résumés. Within the nomination committee we're going to be assessing and ranking the interested people," said Attao.

Attao added that she and the committee are hoping to put together a list of three to five board prospects, and is hoping to identify Filipino construction workers and/or Filipino business owners so that the group is represented as well. Currently, the NMTI board comprises five members: four from Saipan who represent the island's businesses, Chamorro, and Carolinian community, and one representative from Rota. Current board vacancies are for a business representative from Saipan and for a Tinian representative.

Attao lauded NMTI's board for its overall work and effort thus far. "Our board has been doing such a great job, and we've been meeting more and consistently. ...There are so many [upcoming] developments, and it's hard to keep up with all of that," said Attao.

File photo shows a view of Pagan in the Northern Islands.
BEA CABRERA

PAGAN

From Page 1

tain) or that an eruption is underway with no or minor volcanic-ash emissions but poses limited hazards.

The USGS ground-based volcano alert levels range from NORMAL, to ADVISORY, WATCH, and WARNING. Its aviation color codes are GREEN, YELLOW, ORANGE, and RED. This means that Pagan Volcano, currently at ORANGE/WATCH, is just one step below RED/WARNING, which means an eruption is imminent or already underway, with significant emission of volcanic ash into the atmosphere.

As a precautionary measure, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, through the CNMI Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, advises mariners and the public to avoid venturing into the immediate area around Pagan for their safety.

"We continue to coordinate with our federal partners through our team at HSEM about the evolving situation [on] Pagan. We ask our residents and boaters to steer clear from the immediate area around Pagan. The safety and protection of our residents are a paramount priority, and we will continue to work closely with USGS on next steps forward," said Torres.

Mount Pagan is not monitored with ground-based geophysical instrumentation. USGS has indicated that it will continue to evaluate satellite imagery, distal geophysical data, and mariner reports when available, but because the volcano is not monitored with ground-based instruments, we cannot provide advanced warning of activity.

This is an evolving situation. HSEM and the Office of the Governor will continue to provide updates moving forward. For more information, visit the following:

■ CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management: http://www.cnmihsem.gov.mp

■ USGS Northern Mariana Duty Scientist (808) 967-8815: http://volcano.wr.usgs.gov/cnmistatus.php

■ Satellite information, Washington VAAC: http://www.ssd.noaa.gov/VAAC/washington.html ***(PR)***

TOGETHER,

From Page 1

have added new employees to support their operations and prepare for upcoming projects.

All these are made possible with the CNMI government utilizing the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funds. The CNMI received $481.8 million in ARPA funding, with $141.3 million to be spent in fiscal year 2021 and $340.5 million in 2022. Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, through the Department of Finance and based on U.S. Treasury guidance, has allocated a significant portion of the ARPA funds for direct cash assistance to help families pay for living expenses.

The local stimulus cards released last month are now being used to pay for rent, food, utility bills, and other essential needs, giving residents the much-needed help at this time, while also providing revenue to local businesses and generating taxes into our coffers. The availability of this financial assistance and other federal aids is very timely as the new school year has started and as the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program ends in the next few days.

Lessons from the success of the local stimulus cards and the build-up of government capacity should be built upon as we continue to navigate through the uncertainties and lingering impacts of the pandemic. Most promising is that through the strategic and prompt utilization of the ARPA funding, we can look forward to seeing critical infrastructure projects get off the ground, generate business activity, and continue our efforts toward economic recovery.

A glimpse at Garapan Fishing Base's future

The three-day Taste of the Marianas was a hit with performers, vendors, and spectators flocking the Garapan Fishing Base.

Due to its location, the Garapan Fishing Base has developed into one of the Commonwealth's most active and productive community gathering sites. As the Marianas envisions a transformation of our islands, imagine if there are regular events and quality amenities in the area. Imagine the development of the area to become a true destination in itself, perhaps even to become a focal site for community events beyond our weekly Sabalu Market. Think of how many residents and tourists it can attract and the revenue and jobs it can generate. Garapan Fishing Base has a great potential, given its prime location and its cultural and communal importance to our residents. It would take only a few right investors with viable plans to transform the area into a signature site of the Marianas.

Developing this prime site for our community needs to be done right. The Commonwealth Economic Development Authority is tasked to help the Marianas find these investors, but CEDA will need the tools and the resources to get the job done. The House of Representatives has stepped in to help CEDA perform its mandate with the unanimous passage of House Bill 22-70 or the Investment Incentive Act of 2021. The bill now awaits the Senate's decision and the Governor's Council of Economic Council is again asking for support from our lawmakers to help us move forward with this critical piece of legislation.

Meanwhile, the GCEA thanks LJ's Lawn Care for cleaning and painting the sidewalks and curbs leading up to Garapan Fishing Base. We would also like to acknowledge once again our Public Private Partnership supporters who participated in our islandwide cleanup campaign last month. Let's enjoy the Labor Day weekend in our destination sites and village facilities. Together, We Can also keep them clean.

For more information, visit the GCEA at cnmieconomy.com, on Facebook and Instagram (@cnmigov.economy), or contact them at gceacnmi@gmail.com.

GUAM

From Page 1

the150th fatality occurred at the Guam Regional Medical City on Sep. 1. In the release, Guam Governor Lou Leon Guerrero offered her condolences to the man's family, and advised the Guam community to "get back to our basics" in regards to COVID-19 safety.

"Although we are facing a global pandemic along with the rest of the world, the tragic passing of a member of our community can make us feel alone. Our mental health is just as important as our physical health. Check in with one another, safely, and let us get back to our basics—wear your mask, wash your hands, watch your distance. To his loved ones, [Lt. Gov. Joshua Tenorio] and I pray you find healing and comfort," said Leon Guerrero.

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Micronesia's president says he mandated vaccines to protect

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Micronesia President David Panuelo said Wednesday he'll continue to walk around his island nation without fear, despite an alleged death threat against him over his government's vaccine mandate.

A month ago, Micronesia became one of the few countries in the world to impose a broad rule requiring that all eligible citizens get vaccinated against the coronavirus.

Soon after, Panuelo signed a decree requiring anybody receiving federal funds to prove they've been vaccinated or risk foregoing their checks. It's a broad net that captures most of the adult population—everyone from business owners getting pandemic stimulus payments to government workers and pensioners getting social security benefits.

Some islanders have strongly objected to the measure. Last week, a man was charged with making threats and other related offenses, which carry a maximum prison sentence of 10 years if he's found guilty.

In court documents, prosecutors said the man wrote a Facebook post which read: "Mr President---My Decision, My Body ... You gona need an army to protect you from now on...You will be assassinate for sure...Mark my word MR. President."

In an interview with The Associated Press, Panuelo said that since the Facebook post was made, authorities had increased the security around his home and office.

"We're such a friendly country," Panuelo said. "To see this coming from within our country, from our population, is quite a surprising element that I've discovered for the first time."

He said he'd promised his administration would remain approachable and transparent while in office and he intended to continue with that.

"I tell my people I will still walk out in the open field," Panuelo said. "Anybody threatens me, I'm not worried about it."

Micronesia, which is east of the Philippines and is home to about 100,000 people, has gone without any local cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began, thanks in part to strict border controls.

"You don't have to wear a mask. Our children are still going to school," Panuelo said. "There is no virus right now. We're enjoying the daily freedoms like we've been enjoying prior to the COVID breakout. And so we want to keep it this way."

Panuelo

He said when the nation's Congress first discussed making vaccines mandatory he raised concerns but later came to embrace the idea.

"We love our citizens, and this is the action that we take to protect our citizens," Panuelo said. "I'm behaving like a father, like I would to my kids."

Panuelo said he believed that personal freedoms and liberties are sacrosanct, but also that the nation's Constitution grants the power to limit certain liberties in situations such as a pandemic.

He said people on the islands tend to live in very close-knit family and community groups, sharing utensils and sleeping on the floor together, and that any outbreak would spread like wildfire.

"I guess freedoms these days are important," Panuelo said. "But how can freedoms be important if you die from them?"

He said that since the mandate was imposed, vaccination rates had leaped from about 43% of eligible Micronesians being fully vaccinated and 52% at least partially vaccinated to about 60% and 70%, respectively.

He said he'd seen some of the backlash to the mandate on social media from people opposed to the vaccines.

James Movick, a restaurant owner, said he was provaccine but had concerns about the mandate. He said it would help islanders maintain their virus-free lifestyles, but many Micronesians worried that any penalties could unfairly target vulnerable groups like pensioners.

Movick said he also wondered if the man who had posted on Facebook actually intended to do anything and if charging him was an overreaction.

Authorities are sensitive to such threats after American lawyer Rachelle Bergeron, 33, was shot and killed outside her home while serving as a prosecutor in Micronesia in 2019.

Two people were later charged in connection with her murder. Panuelo said he's been involved with that case, which has been delayed because of the pandemic.

As with the Bergeron case, the FBI has been helping investigate the alleged Facebook threat. Micronesia enjoys close relations with the U.S. under a compact of free association.

Panuelo said he doesn't necessarily think the charges in the Facebook case are an overreaction after the investigation revealed the suspect had a history of making threats and had been involved in other crimes.

He also pointed out that two presidents on the nearby island nation of Palau were assassinated in the 1980s.

In court documents, prosecutors said that Benneth Edmund, a retail store owner and assistant clerk, wrote the threatening post under the fictitious Facebook profile "Jaylo David."

A police report said that when interviewed, Edmund said he was friends on Facebook with Jaylo David but didn't know who was behind the profile.

Public defender Nixon Alten, who is representing Edmund, told AP that Edmund had been released from custody after his arrest and intended to plead not guilty at a hearing later this month. Alten said he couldn't comment further.

Panuelo said he would continue reinforcing the message to his people that getting vaccinated was the right decision. He hoped about 95% of the eligible population would be fully vaccinated by December.

"You only have to look elsewhere to understand why we're doing this, because people die," Panuelo said. "And if we don't do it this way, then we could be next."

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
MVA-RFP-21-2039
For: Marianas Visitors Authority Office Space Lease on the island of Saipan, MP 96950

Submission /Closing Date: **September 09, 2021** Time: **1:00PM (ChST)**

Submit sealed proposals to: Marianas Visitors Authority
Attn: Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building
Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861
Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the RFP package on or after **August 26, 2021** at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan, from 8:00AM to 5:00PM (ChST), Monday through Friday, except holidays.

The RFP package can be emailed to anyone interested. The request via email must reference "MVA-RFP-21-2039" on the subject line to lmaratita@mymarianas.com

/s/ Ellsbeth Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

/s/ Priscilla M. Iakopo
Managing Director, MVA

JOB VACANCY ANNOUCEMENT
Administrative Bookkeeper

Position Summary:
Maintaining accurate records of accounts payable and receivable, payroll, and daily financial entries and reconciliations. Perform other daily accounting tasks. May also assist with basic HR duties like new hire documents, compliance, and other duties as assigned.

Job Responsibilities:
- Maintains historical records by filing documents.
- Complies with federal, state, and local legal requirements by studying requirements; enforcing adherence to requirements; filing reports; advising management on needed actions.
- Contributes to team effort by accomplishing related results as needed.

Work Hours:
- Monday – Friday : 8:00am – 5:00pm

Bookkeeper Qualifications / Skills:
- Developing Standards
- Analyzing Information
- Dealing with Complexity
- Reporting Research Results
- Data Entry Skills
- Accounting
- Attention to Detail
- Confidentiality
- Thoroughness

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PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP21-CHCC/HIT-002
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 7th, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)
"PROCUREMENT OF CHCC INTER-FACILITY FIBER OPTICS"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-OPD/DPW-154
SUBMISSION DATE: SEPTEMBER 20, 2021 TIME: 09:30 A.M.
"MARPI BACKUP POWER FEASIBILITY STUDY"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB MAY BE MADE IN ANY MODE OR WRITTEN COMMUNICATION TO **MR. MICHAEL JOHNSON**, VIA E-MAIL AT Michael.johnson@opd.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN 4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, SEPTEMBER 01, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PROTECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ A. KODEP OGUMORO-ULUDONG
DIRECTOR, OPD

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

NMTI
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Tel. No.: (670) 235-6684

Board of Trustee Vacancy Announcement
Vacancy Announcement # 21 - 002

Details of this Vacancy: (To be completed by Nomination Committee Chairperson)

This announcement is to fill the following vacancy for a:
• Saipan Business Representative
For the remaining term set to expire March 11, 2023 .
(Insert Date)

Qualifications for Board of Trustees:

Qualifications of a Board member consist of the following:
- A legal domiciliary of the CNMI and a U.S. Citizen.
- Of legal adult voting age within the CNMI. In this particular vacancy, the adult must be a registered voter at their respective islands; and
- A demonstrated capacity for representing the CNMI's career and technical training fields relative to meeting the overall purpose of NMTI.

No person may become a Trustee while a CNMI government or NMTI employee, or until one year after the conclusion of CNMI government or NMTI employment.

Please email cnmi.nmti@gmail .com for more details, job description & qualifications. Job duties & description can be referenced at CNMI Public Law 20-92 §12119.

How to submit interest:

To submit interest to serve on the Northern Marianas Technical Institute Board of Trustees, kindly email a letter of interest and your resume to: cnmi.nmti@gmail.com

Due date: (To be Completed by Nomination Committee Chairperson)

Closing Date: Friday, September 3, 2021.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

FLORO JR. A. BAUTISTA PETITIONER) FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 20-0260
VS.)
EMELITA BASAS BAUTISTA RESPONDENT) **SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION**

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:
YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the Court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is PMB 1373 P.O. Box 10002 Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgment by Default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.

Dated this 8th day of July, 2021.

/s/ Clerk of Court

Joey P. San Nicolas
Attorney-at-Law
San Nicolas Law Office, LLC
2nd Floor, Island Commercial Center, Rm. 203
Chalan Pale Arnold, Gualo Rai
P.O. Box 10,001 PMB 602, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7659 | Fax: (670) 234-9218
Email: jpsn@sannicolaslaw.net

Attorney for Executrix Margarita Takai Prater

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: ANTONIO DUENAS TAKAI, Decedent.) Civil Action No.: 21-0131-CV) **NOTICE OF HEARING**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that there will be a hearing on Executrix's Petition for Decree of Final Distribution in this probate matter to be heard before the Honorable Joseph N. Camacho, Associate Judge, on the 16th day of September, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., at Room 220, Superior Court of the Northern Mariana Islands, Susupe Village, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear at the hearing and show cause, if any, why the order should not be made.

Dated this 31ST day of August, 2021.

Hon. JOSEPH N. CAMACHO
Associate Judge

Joey P. San Nicolas
Attorney-at-Law
San Nicolas Law Office, LLC
2nd Floor, Island Commercial Center, Rm. 203
Chalan Pale Arnold, Gualo Rai
P.O. Box 10,001 PMB 602, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-7659 | Fax: (670) 234-9218
Email: jpsn@sannicolaslaw.net

Attorney for Petitioner Violeta Ablog

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: NESTOR RAFANAN ABLOG, Decedent.) Civil Action No.: 21-0237-CV) **NOTICE OF HEARING**) **NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

TO: ALL HEIRS, DEVISEES, LEGATEES AND CREDITORS OF: NESTOR RAFANAN ABLOG

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the petition of Violeta Ablog for the issuance of letters of administration will be heard before the Honorable Joseph N. Camacho, Associate Judge, on the 16th day of September, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., at Room 220, Superior Court of the Northern Mariana Islands, Susupe Village, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear at the hearing and show cause, if any, why the order should not be made.

For further particulars, please refer to the Petition on file herein, or contact counsel for Petitioner, Joey P. San Nicolas, P.O. Box 10,001 PMB 602, Saipan, MP 96950; telephone (670) 234-7659 and email jpsn@sannicolaslaw.net.

Pursuant to Rule 11, NMI R. Prob. P., notice is hereby given to all creditors of thedecedent, **NESTOR RAFANAN ABLOG**, or of his estate, that they must file their daims with the Clerk of the Superior Court, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, within sixty (60) days of the first publication of this Notice, or the claims will be forever barred.

Dated this 18th day of August, 2021.

Hon. JOSEPH N. CAMACHO
Associate Judge

Pacific Rim joins SCC membership

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday welcomed Pacific Rim, a construction and real estate development company, as the latest addition to its membership.

Originally based in Guam, Pacific Rim came to the CNMI in 2018 to help in the construction efforts of Imperial Pacific International LLC in Garapan. Since then, Pacific Rim has taken on various projects and business opportunities that made the company decide to establish an office here as well.

According to Pacific Rim president Keith J. Stewart, the three years he has spent on island gave him a different perspective. "Moving and living here for the past couple of years pushed me to get started and be more involved in the community. …We are working on several projects and continuously trying to find ways on how we can have a greater and positive impact on the CNMI," he said.

He concedes that his company has more projects in Guam than in the CNMI—"by a large margin," according to him—such as projects for the U.S. military "but I just fell in love with the island. I would go back and forth and end up staying, so I'm working up a plan to…call Saipan my home."

Pacific Rim is currently finishing its work on the planned casino on Tinian, the ongoing roofing project for Joeten Enterprises, and they are about to start on Isa Villas Phase II on Capital Hill and 56 more affordable housing units.

Stewart said their Guam office is running itself and that they have a good team there so it allowed him to look for other business options, one of which is co-founding Marianas Pacific Airline that will provide service for both passengers and goods in the CNMI.

Announced last month, Marianas Pacific Airline will be a CNMI-based airline that would initially target travelers from Japan, Korea, Australia, and the Philippines. The initial plan was for a freight aircraft, when aviation experts on Stewart's team looked at the numbers and the global environment and thought that it would be more viable to expand services and build a full passenger and freight service for the CNMI.

Stewart said his team found that transportation was one of the hurdles that needed to get solved for the CNMI economy to move forward. As a result, Stewart and his partners stepped into that area. "We spent close to a year doing the research and putting together the plans for Marianas Pacific Airlines to provide stability, and affordability on air service to the Commonwealth that would be operated by seasoned airline professionals with a specific interest in supporting the needs of the CNMI," he said.

SCC president Joe Guerrero said he is looking forward to working with Pacific Rim. "It is always refreshing news to hear people investing and committed in developing our islands and economy. We need long-term investors on island and Pacific Rim is starting that journey. It appears that Pacific Rim has found the CNMI as its new home. Keith is looking forward to investing and reinvesting in the CNMI as he feels a part of the community," he said.

From left, Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Joe Guerrero, Bridge Capital LLC vice president Bartley Jackson, and Pacific Rim president Keith Stewart. BEA CABRERA

House passes bill to regulate bioprospecting activities

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives passed Tuesday a bill that seeks to regulate bioprospecting activities within the CNMI in order to ensure prior, informed consent, and equitable sharing of benefits.

The full House adopted the report of the House Standing Committee on Natural Resources that recommended the passage of House Bill 22-22, HS1. All 16 representatives present at the session voted "yes" to pass the legislation. The bill now goes to the Senate for action.

If enacted into law, the bill—also known as the Richard B. Seman Bioprospecting Act of 2021—will mandate the Department of Lands and Natural Resources to come up within 180 days with the rules and regulations governing the conduct bioprospecting activities in the CNMI, including the process for registration and the fees.

Bioprospecting refers to the search for plant and animal species from which medicinal drugs, biochemicals, and other commercially valuable material can be obtained.

Before the voting, House Committee on Natural Resources chair Rep. Sheila J. Babauta (D-Saipan) said they did spent months soliciting comments and have received well over 10 comments about the bill.

Babauta thanked the committee members and the bill's author, Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan), for this legislation that will allow more bioprospecting activities to be regulated within the CNMI.

"We are surrounded by this blessing of natural resources in our oceans," Babauta said. This bill, she said, will allow for any scientists and organizations to come to the CNMI and study its natural organisms. This, she said, will open opportunities for people to engage in medicinal pharmaceuticals or any other kind of processes that these compounds can produce.

Babauta said they did have a lengthy committee meeting where they went through the bill. She said Demapan is in the committee and he was a part of the process.

"So I am ready to vote. I highly encourage everyone to support this bill," she said.

Demapan said this is another run at this bill, which was the vision of the late Rep. Richard Seman. He said this is why he included a short title provision to name this bill after the late representative.

"It is an environmentally responsible bill. And it's also a bill that ensures that we as people of the land have a stake when parts of our resources are harvested for commercial use," he said.

Demapan introduced the bill last February. He introduced similar legislation in the 20th Legislature in April 2017. The House passed the bill in September 2017 and transmitted to the Senate.

A similar legislation was introduced by Rep. Richard Seman in the 18th Legislature. The House passed it in October 2014 and was transmitted to the Senate. No action was taken by the Senate.

PUTI'ON TWIN HULL
NOTICE OF AUCTION/BIDDING

Year: 1984; Official No. 677731; Call Sign: WCZ5662; Service: Passenger
Hull Material: Wood; Horsepower: 530; Propulsion: Diesel
Gross Tonnage: 99 GRT; Net Tonnage: 85 NRT; Length: 83.6; Breadth: 30.0; Depth: 11.0

For more Information

Pursuant to the Stipulated Judgment in Commonwealth Ports Authority v. Saipan Sea Ventures, Inc., Civ. No. 18-0498, notice is given of the auction of the vessel owned by Saipan Sea Ventures, Inc., to be sold at auction by the Commonwealth Ports Authority. Risk of loss remains with Saipan Sea Ventures, Inc. until the winning bidder's bid is approved by the Commonwealth Superior Court after which time the winning bidder shall assume ownership and responsibility for the vessel. By submitting a bid and if accepted, the winning bidder agrees to accept full risk and responsibility of the vessel once approved by the Commonwealth Superior Court, including compliance with CNMI and Federal/USCG laws and regulations.

Please contact Commonwealth Ports Authority counsel, Robert T. Torres at (670) 234-7859/234-5750. Email: robert.torres@rttlawgroup.com. **Minimum bid for the Puti'on Twin Hull is $100,000.00**. Any bid(s) less than the minimum bid will be rejected. Bid submissions will be closed at 4 pm on **September 23, 2021**. Bid(s) opening shall be at 4:30 p.m. on **September 24, 2021**. The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any and all offer(s). A "Puti'on Twin Hull" bid form can be obtained from the Commonwealth Ports Authority, through its Counsel at Robert T. Torres Law Office, Chalan Kiya P.O. Box 503758 CK Saipan, MP 96950.

Bid Instruction

1. This is a private auction/bidding on behalf of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The bidding is conducted through the Law Office of Robert T. Torres using a written/sealed bid process. However, the Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any and all offers including any offer not determined to be commercially reasonable. Bids may be submitted to the Law Office of Robert T. Torres in Chalan Kiya, Saipan.

2. The Puti'on Twin Hull is offered for bid and sale **"As Is"** and without any warranty or guarantee as to fitness for use and each bidder is on notice to research this specialized and particular unit as a twin hull motor craft and the conditions in which it may be used in the CNMI or in other locations.

3. All sales shall be paid by Cash or Cashier's Check within three (3) calendar days of notice to the winning bidder. Personal checks/company checks are not accepted.

4. If a bid is accepted, the winning bidder shall tender the full amount upon notice and take shall be responsible for the removal of the vessel withing three (3) calendar days. Otherwise the next highest bidder shall be considered. The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel the bid and resell/re-auction the unit.

5. Inspection: Any person wishing to inspect the Puti'on Twin Hull may contact the Law Office of Robert T. Torres to request for inspection at least two (2) days prior to inspection.

6. All bids are final.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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An EVICTION notice?
AFGHAN REFUGEES

EDITORIAL

Biden spins alternate reality on Afghanistan

President Joe Biden continues to live in an alternate universe in regard to the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. As someone put it on Twitter, his message is: "The mission was a complete success" and "it's all my predecessor's fault."

An angrier, more defensive Biden spoke publicly Tuesday to mark an end to the evacuation mission—and to the 20-year war in Afghanistan.

As he noted, the airlift was a tremendous feat, given the chaos surrounding the exit—a condition for which Biden bears much of the blame.

But boasting about the success of the mission was unseemly given at least 250 American citizens were left behind to face an uncertain fate. Many more thousands of Afghans who assisted our mission were also abandoned, and are now being tracked down and killed by the country's new Taliban rulers.

Biden Tuesday continued to conflate the decision to leave Afghanistan, which was widely supported, with how he carried out the leaving.

Certainly, American support for the U.S. presence in Afghanistan had waned, though many experts say a small force was necessary to serve intelligence and counter-terrorism purposes.

The issue Biden is skirting is the bungling of the withdrawal. He claimed Tuesday there was unanimous support for the plan among his military and security advisers, even though reports of vigorous dissent continue to emerge from the Pentagon and intelligence community.

Biden spoke of those Americans remaining in Afghanistan as if they were volunteers, saying he would get them out "if they choose" to leave.

Most wanted out, but couldn't get to evacuation zones and are now in hiding. The president's faith in the Taliban to help collect them and get them safely back home is pollyannish.

Nothing in Biden's remarks should assure the families of those Americans left behind that their loved ones will be safely returned. After all, Biden promised not to end the withdrawal until everyone of them was out, a vow he didn't keep.

While saying he accepts full responsibility, Biden disingenuously claimed his options were limited by the withdrawal deal made by former President Donald Trump. While the decision to leave was made by Trump, the execution belonged to Biden.

It was Biden's decision, not Trump's, to ask just 6,000 U.S. troops to carry out the evacuation while facing tens of thousands of hostile Taliban fighters. It was also his call to close the Bagram Air Base, which could have served as a second evacuation site, before the airlift began.

Biden said America's vital interest in Afghanistan is to assure it "can never again be used for an attack on our homeland."

How does he propose to guarantee that, with the Taliban in control and now armed with the weapons we left behind, and without American eyes and ears in the country?

The departure from Afghanistan was a total failure, whether or not Biden accepts that reality, and sets up the Taliban for future attacks on American interests.

Accountability is demanded. Congress must investigate

See BIDEN on next page

5 steps to protect football players' brains and keep the sport alive

By LEIGH STEINBERG
Los Angeles Times

Leigh Steinberg is a sports agent, philanthropist and author.

As more and more parents in the U.S. see the connection between football and brain damage, the game we love will change. Many will tell their teenage boys, "You can play any sport you want … except tackle football." What's left will be a gladiator sport.

We now know that football is harming players through repeated trauma and long-term brain damage. From the NFL on down to Pop Warner youth leagues, the game, the training and the gear must adapt to reduce harm. Decades of data tell us what needs to change.

Having represented professional athletes since 1975, I've been worrying about football players' health since long before the first diagnosis of chronic traumatic encephalopathy in a former NFL player, in 2002.

In the late 1980s, I sat in the stands at Sun Devil Stadium watching a young quarterback who was also my client play against the Arizona Cardinals. I watched as a defensive player sacked him and knocked him to the turf. Blood oozed out of his ear as he lay motionless on the ground. My heart pounded as I stared at this young athlete and wondered aloud if he was dead. After what felt like an eternity, he gradually regained consciousness. Watching as the medics helped him off the field, a wave of relief washed over me, immediately followed by a crisis of conscience.

I had to make a choice 30 years ago of whether to walk away from the industry or work from within to improve it. The players and I made a lot of money as their careers took off, but I had a responsibility to my clients to do more than enrich our bank accounts. Their long-term health was more important than anything else.

That made the decision clear, so I had a new mission: understanding concussions thoroughly, the components of the injury, long- and short-term damage, recovery, education and prevention. I've been aligned with a number of neurologists and concussion safety advocates, and I hosted conferences to present the latest medical information to the players and their families, the leagues, teams and the public.

Since the late '80s, we've learned so much about the risk to athletes in collision sports like hockey, field hockey and even AYSO soccer. Pre-adolescent brains are especially vulnerable. Repeated blows over years escalate the risk. A 2017 report on the brains of 111 former NFL players who died between the ages of 23 and 89 found almost all had CTE. Only one brain did not.

Now we have some sense of how dangerous repeated blows to the head can be. To its credit, the NFL has adopted and enforced concussion protocols that take clearly injured players off the field. But football has not changed enough. In some ways it's getting worse, with a new generation of bigger, stronger and faster athletes who collide much harder than their predecessors did.

The best way to keep football alive is to ensure standardized safety protocols not only in professional leagues but also in collegiate, high school and youth sports. The following steps would be a good start. They are based on what we know now that we did not know in 1975, and the list should change and grow as we learn even more.

1. Take hitting out of training camp and practices for kids and professionals. Save it for the games. This could cut down concussions dramatically. The NFL could make this change instantly, and other leagues would follow.

2. Leagues and coaches must demand better blocking and tackling techniques that don't involve the head and neck. These must be taught at an early age, and the dangerous current practices should be banned.

3. Delay the age at which children are allowed to play tackle football. Younger brains are still developing.

4. Develop and require new helmets and padding on top of the head to protect the brain.

5. Continue to support research into new treatments for concussions and ensure that injured players receive the best care to minimize long-term harm when head injuries do occur. Some examples available now or on the horizon include a nasal spray administered immediately so that an acute injury might not cause long-term damage, or treatments intended to help injured brains heal, such as hyperbaric oxygen or repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation and neurofeedback.

Until brain injuries are curable conditions, a few simple precautions would save countless players from untold suffering.

I believe that sports like football, hockey and soccer teach great values and that mastering them imparts invaluable life skills. It builds camaraderie and lifetime friendships. For a fortunate and hardworking few, playing can even be lucrative work for a few years. None of that is worth risking brain health.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Patriotism and freedom: The two most misused terms in US politics

Two of the most frequently used words in right-wing America, "freedom" and "Constitution," are also among the most misused.

Many American conservatives believe the "Constitution" gives them the "freedom" to do just about anything they like. They are free to own guns and carry them openly, free to refuse to be vaccinated, free to refuse to wear masks in public places, free to refuse to accept the results of a free and fair election, and, to some, even free to invade government buildings and threaten those who work there with violence or death. Combining the two, these conservatives are convinced that anyone who asserts such "freedom" in the name of the "Constitution" is a "patriot."

From a moral or philosophical perspective, there are any number of flaws in this argument. The first and most obvious is that absolute freedom for everyone is impossible. Almost by definition, absolute freedom for some means diminished freedom for others. If, for example, potentially COVID-infected people are free to refuse vaccinations or mask mandates and swarm into schools or other public places, those who fear contracting the disease have their freedom of movement limited. And so, the "personal freedom" currently extolled by, among others, Govs. Greg Abbott of Texas and Ron DeSantis of Florida, is merely the freedom for their supporters to curtail the freedom of others, although it is never expressed in those terms.

As the pandemic worsened and the disastrous impact of the "personal freedom" argument became apparent, some conservatives began to chuck in the phrase "personal responsibility," as if merely asking people to behave with consideration toward others would cause them to abandon their ideals and give in to what they see as tyranny. Predictably, the requests rang hollow and it soon became apparent that "personal responsibility" was to be soundly rejected as a restraining factor in these patriots' behavior. Even that paragon of personal freedom (for himself), Donald Trump was booed for urging his erstwhile supporters to be vaccinated.

The question remains, however, whether the Constitution guarantees, or even suggests, the sort of freedom being touted by conservatives—whether "We the People," is actually "We the People ... Not You."

The answer is a resounding no. One need only to read the preamble to recognize that forming "a more perfect Union" and securing "the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity" includes promoting "the general Welfare." The power to determine "general welfare" and enforce provisions in that interest—what is referred to in legal circles as "police power"—is clearly reserved to the government formed from that Constitution. While there are some areas in which police power is delegated to the states, state action cannot be extended to threaten the welfare of the nation as a whole. To buttress that notion, a multitude of Supreme Court decisions interpreting the Constitution make it clear that there can be no freedom without responsibility, and that government is obligated to impose such responsibility when some of "the people" do not meet that standard voluntarily.

For example, freedom of speech, a favorite topic for conservatives these days, has been judged to be in no way absolute. The most famous prohibition forbids yelling fire in a crowded theater, a phrase coined by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1919 in United States v. Schenck. A more telling decision, however, was rendered by a unanimous court in 1942 in Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire, where the justices ruled that "fighting words" which "by their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace," were not protected by the First Amendment. Although Chaplinsky still stands, what constitutes "fighting words" has remained a subject for conjecture ever since. Still, the message that free speech must be accompanied by a degree of civic responsibility remains a part of American law.

Another example can be found in Justice Antonin Scalia's controversial decision in District of Columbia v. Heller. Conservatives hailed the decision as establishing their unfettered right to own firearms, which they were convinced was embodied in the Second Amendment. The most important gun rights decision before Heller was United States v. Miller in 1939. There the court ruled unanimously that Jack Miller, a bank robber on the run after squealing on his compatriots, did not have the right to transport a sawed-off shotgun across state lines in violation of the National Firearms Act, because his weapon had no possible military purpose and therefore would not be used in a "well regulated militia." (Miller was not around to lament his loss. He was found murdered before the decision was rendered.)

By LAWRENCE GOLDSTONE
The Fulcrum

Lawrence Goldstone is the author of On Account of Race: The Supreme Court, White Supremacy and the Ravaging of African American Voting Rights (Counterpoint Press). This piece was originally published by Independent Voter News.

In Heller, Scalia, speaking for a 5-4 court, cast Miller and the militia requirement aside and struck down a District of Columbia ordinance that required all firearms including rifles and shotguns be kept "unloaded and disassembled or bound by a trigger lock," even in an individual's home. For the first time, the court found that the right to keep and bear arms applied to private individuals. The decision was excoriated by dissenters, who claimed (correctly) that the Second Amendment was intended to address the need for common defense in a nation that could not afford a standing army. Conservatives, of course, hailed the decision as an expression of personal freedom.

But what those freedom-loving conservatives generally fail to mention is the limitations Scalia put on a right they view as unconditional. "Like most rights," Scalia wrote, "the right secured by the Second Amendment is not unlimited. From Blackstone through the 19th-century cases, commentators and courts routinely explained that the right was not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose." As a result, although Congress has lacked the will to do so, any number of laws limiting the sale or use of firearms would not infringe on the Heller decision.

Although there is no absolute yardstick to be sure, to create a free society, individual freedom must always be subject to limitations, one of which is that no person can have the right to put another person in danger. Patriotism then is not the demand for unbridled individual freedom at the expense of others, but the willingness to give up a degree of individual freedom for the good of others.

We would be a much stronger nation if both our leaders and our citizenry grasped that basic truth.

We must end the housing crisis

The nation is on the brink of a severe housing disaster.

More than 1.2 million families are facing eviction in the coming months. Millions of others face foreclosures, persistent homelessness, unaffordable rental housing and out-of-reach home ownership.

The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in late August striking down President Joe Biden's eviction moratorium will cause the pace of evictions to accelerate. The human costs of eviction are enormous, made worse by the ravages and uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

The federal eviction moratorium, put in place by President Donald Trump and extended by Biden, was designed to buy time to get federal emergency pandemic funds to local jurisdictions to fill the gap between lost wages and unpaid rents.

Unfortunately, states and localities have moved at a snail's pace to spend that money. As of early August, only 11% of the $46.5 billion of funds from the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program had reached tenants and landlords.

The eviction blowout is the tip of the iceberg of a housing affordability crisis. For many households, rent or mortgage payments are absorbing half of their household budget and rendering the dream of homeownership impossible.

Many communities need more affordable housing stock, but the main driver of the crisis isn't housing supply; it's who owns that supply during a time of extreme wealth gaps.

In some places, large corporations and private equity firms like Blackstone have moved in to buy up millions of units of rental housing, including single-family homes. Families locked out of homeownership are forced to rent the homes that they aren't able to buy.

Other investor-buyers are removing millions of units of rental housing from the market and converting them to short-term rentals like Airbnb. This drives up rents for people who actually live in these communities.

Finally, wealthy investors from around the world are buying up U.S. real estate—not to live in, but as a form of wealth storage. In cities like Los Angeles, that means tens of thousands of units of vacant housing sit alongside tens of thousands of people without homes.

Many of these buyers are using anonymous shell companies to mask who the real owners are. Today, anonymous shell companies own 40% of the rental housing market, an estimated 18 million out of 48 million rental units nationwide, according to Census data.

After World War II, our nation experienced a similar housing emergency. Back then, Congress made expanding affordable housing a national priority. The famous GI Bill allocated funds to build rental housing and encourage homeownership with low-interest loans through the Veterans Administration and Farmers Home.

It wasn't an equitable program—nearly all of the households that benefited were white. But it moved millions of people from tenancy to homeownership, a ticket on the wealth-building train to the middle class. Lawmakers today could repeat a similar program without the racial bias.

By CHUCK COLLINS
Progressive Perspectives

Chuck Collins is the co-editor of Inequality.org at the Institute for Policy Studies and author of The Wealth Hoarders: How Billionaires Pay Millions to Hide Trillions.

But many communities aren't waiting for the federal government to act. From Rhode Island to California, cities and states are levying "mansion taxes," taxing luxury housing sales to fund permanently affordable housing. Other jurisdictions are taxing vacant units and passing laws requiring the disclosure of real ownership.

Who owns the housing matters. Communities need to expand the supply of local homeownership and permanently affordable rental housing, owned by nonprofits and community housing authorities.

Failure to act will lead to the destruction of stable communities and undermine the possibility of economic recovery for the majority of households.

BIDEN

From Page 8

to determine exactly what went wrong, and who is responsible for the decisions.

Biden had help in making this mess. Top lieutenants such as Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin should be required to explain their roles as well.

This national humiliation should not be allowed to give way to the next crisis dominating the news cycle until it is fully answered for.

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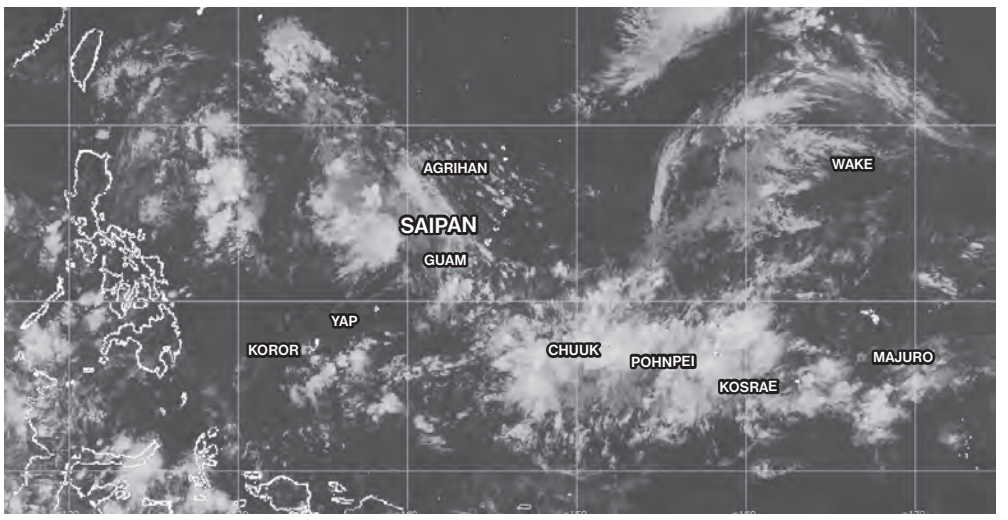
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds around 10 mph.	Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy. Scattered light showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.
87º 78º	87º 76º	87º 76º	87º 77º	87º 77º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:55 AM, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Skies have cleared nicely across the Marianas overnight, and only isolated showers are evident on IR satellite imagery, mainly near Tinian and Saipan. But satellite also shows some disturbed weather a couple hundred miles south and southeast of the islands, associated with a very weak circulation west of Chuuk near 8N 147E, with winds mainly around 5 knots. Gentle trades are seen across the Marianas, with seas of 3-4 ft at Ipan buoy.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Strong thunderstorms	77 / 83 °F
Palau	Partly sunny	81 / 88 °F
Yap	Strong thunderstorms	81 / 87 °F
Chuuk	Partly cloudy	80 / 88 °F
Pohnpei	Mostly cloudy	74 / 86 °F
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	76 / 85 °F
Majuro	Heavy rain	80 / 85 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:04 AM	6:27 PM
Saturday	6:04 AM	6:27 PM
Sunday	6:04 AM	6:26 PM
Monday	6:04 AM	6:25 PM
Tuesday	6:05 AM	6:24 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	2:17 AM	3:44 PM	-
Saturday	3:12 AM	4:33 PM	-
Sunday	4:08 AM	5:20 PM	-
Monday	5:05 AM	6:04 PM	-
Tuesday	6:00 AM	6:47 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Morning clouds	46 / 56 °F
Beijing	Partly cloudy	73 / 87 °F
Hong Kong	Heavy rain	80 / 86 °F
Honolulu	Partly cloudy	74 / 82 °F
London	Morning clouds	60 / 74 °F
Los Angeles	Sunny	62 / 85 °F
Manila	Mostly cloudy	80 / 87 °F
Melbourne	Afternoon clouds	47 / 60 °F
Miami	Partly sunny	79 / 87 °F
New York	Partly cloudy	74 / 87 °F
Osaka	Partly sunny	78 / 94 °F
Paris	Partly sunny	61 / 76 °F
Pusan	Partly cloudy	80 / 91 °F
Rome	Partly cloudy	66 / 87 °F
Salem	Sunny	67 / 97 °F
San Francisco	Morning clouds	57 / 69 °F
Seoul	Mostly cloudy	78 / 91 °F
Tokyo	Thunderstorms	77 / 86 °F
Washington, DC	Partly sunny	72 / 89 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
3:37 AM	High Tide	1.62
11:10 AM	Low Tide	0.13
6:38 PM	High Tide	1.79
11:56 PM	Low Tide	1.25

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:15am	9:55am	2, 4, 5, 7
UA117	6:30am	7:10am	1, 3, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:30am	8:50pm	2, 5 via Guam
UA117/183	6:30am	9:10pm	3, 6, 7 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	6:55pm	8:50pm	2, 5
UA183	7:15pm	9:10pm	3, 6, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	4:50am	5:50am	1, 3, 6
UA174	7:30am	8:11am	2, 4, 5, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	9:50pm	5:50am+1	2, 5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:25pm	8:11am+1	3, 6, 7 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	9:50pm	4:00am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:25pm	4:40am+1	3, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

TO HELP AFGHANISTAN EVACUEE AID EFFORTS

United's MileagePlus members urged to donate miles

United Airlines announced yesterday that its MileagePlus members can help in the Afghanistan relief effort by participating in the airline's mile-raising platform, Miles on a Mission, and donate to three non-profit organizations that are using air travel to transport and support Afghan citizens. As part of this campaign, United will match all donations up to five million miles.

For the last week, United has directly supported the U.S. Department of Defense and its mission to transport Afghan evacuees to the U.S.

Participating non-profits, include:

Miles4Migrants: A non-profit that is using miles to book air travel for Afghans who have left their home country, and need flight assistance to reach their final destination.

Americares: A health-focused relief and development organization mobilizing medical professionals to provide in-flight medical care on United relief flights to the U.S.

World Central Kitchen: A food-focused, global relief organization that will provide meals to Afghan refugees as they arrive at various locations across the world.

"United has been proud to put our expertise to work and partner with the Department of Defense over the last week to help urgently evacuate thousands of people from Afghanistan," said Suzi Cabo, managing director of global community engagement, United Airlines. "We're now ready to offer our MileagePlus community the opportunity to support those organizations that are providing critical support to those Afghans and their families that risked their own lives to help our servicemen and women. We know our most loyal customers will step up to support those in need because they always do."

United's mile-raising campaign is an extension of the airline's ongoing collaboration with Americares, World Central Kitchen and Miles-4Migrants to support the Afghanistan relief efforts. Medical professionals from Americares have joined United volunteers on several of the airline's recent relief flights to bring Afghan refugees, American citizens and service members to the U.S.

United has also supported the efforts of World Central Kitchen at Washington Dulles International Airport as they provide comforting meals for all Afghan evacuees arriving in the U.S.

United Airlines employees help pass food stuff to be loaded on a plane for the benefit of Afghan refugees. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In addition to helping transport Afghan refugees to the U.S., United is working with partner organizations to help support the thousands of refugees who will need to be resettled across the country once they have been fully processed by the U.S. government. United is partnering with Miles-4Migrants to provide critically needed air travel to fly Afghan citizens from several military bases in the U.S. to their final destinations.

"Like so many, we have been watching the tragic situation in Afghanistan unfold, and are working to support Afghans in their time of need however possible," said Andy Freedman, co- founder and managing director at Miles4Migrants. "We are grateful to have the support of MileagePlus members to help us fly as many Afghan refugees and other displaced persons from around the world to safe new homes."

Additionally, United is working closely with Walgreens to ensure the passengers on the airline's relief flights have all the critical personal care items they need to comfortably travel. Walgreens has generously donated personal care and comfort items to United including diapers, disinfecting wipes, feminine hygiene products, baby bottles and more, which are being provisioned onboard United's CRAF flights to the U.S.

So far, United has operated 13 international missions, carrying more than 3,908 U.S. citizens and Afghan evacuees safely to the U.S. More than 8,000 United employees have raised their hands to participate in these missions—working as crew members, onboard translators, volunteer onboard medics, coordinating the complex operation and more. Many of these employees have personal or family ties to Afghanistan and/or are military veterans.

For more information on United's mile-raising campaign, or to donate, please visit donate.mileageplus.com/afghanrefugeesupport. ***(PR)***

IN BRIEF

- MileagePlus members can donate miles to non-profits providing air travel, medical care and meals to Afghan evacuees through United's mile crowd-sourcing platform, Miles on a Mission.
- United will match all donations up to five million miles

BUSINESS BRIEFS

FTC orders company to quit surveillance app business

BOSTON (AP)—The Federal Trade Commission has for the first time banned a company that makes so-called stalkerware—software used to surreptitiously track a cellphone user's activities and location—from continuing in the surveillance app business. Wednesday's action applies to the marketer of SpyFone, Puerto Rico-based Support King LLC, and its CEO, Scott Zuckerman. Such commercial surveillance products secretly obtain unfettered access to someone's smartphone, leading to serious harm, the FTC said in a statement on its website. Support King marketed SpyFone as a tool to monitor the activities of children and employees. But it neglected to prevent stalkers and domestic abusers from using it for surveillance, the FTC said. The company's products let the installer monitor a person's online activity, including text and video chats and, in a premium version, even secretly activate the device's microphone to record phone and video conversations.

OPEC steadily adds back production as economy recovers

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP)—The OPEC oil producers' cartel and allied non-member countries led by Russia signed off Wednesday on gradually increasing production as the global economy and demand for fuel continue to recover from the worst of the coronavirus pandemic. The group fended off pressure from the U.S. to move faster in restoring production cuts made during the pandemic and potentially ease costs at the pump for American drivers. The group, known as OPEC+, agreed at an online meeting to stick with earlier plans to add back 400,000 barrels per day from Oct. 1. The cartel and its allies are gingerly restoring deep cuts made last year, when lockdowns and travel restrictions caused demand for fuel and prices to crater. Prices fell ahead of the meeting but trimmed losses afterwards. Oil was off 0.4% at $68.26 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, while Brent crude, an international benchmark, traded down 0.4% at $71.36 per barrel. Prices have recovered from a slump to just above $62 for New York Mercantile Exchange crude on Aug. 20.

Small businesses face slow, difficult recovery after Ida

New York (AP)—Small businesses hit by Hurricane Ida face a slow and daunting recovery as they grapple with storm damage, a lack of power, water and internet service and limited ability to communicate with clients or customers. It's yet another blow for business owners who have been coping with the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic for over a year. "Our fear is many businesses aren't going to be able to recover, given everything else they've gone through for the past 18 months," said David Chase, vice president of outreach for the advocacy group Small Business Majority. More than 1 million homes and businesses in Louisiana and Mississippi were left without power as Ida pushed through on Sunday into early Monday. Officials said some areas could be without power for weeks. Experts say there are several ways for businesses to begin to recover from a disaster. First and foremost is making sure all staff and their families are safe. Then consider low-interest natural disaster loans from the government and insurance claims. The process could drag on for weeks if not longer.

Marianas Creations' First Friday: A celebration of local art and culture

Local art and culture promotion event "First Friday" is back again at Marianas Creations.

For the month of September, Marianas Creations will be collaborating with Everest Kitchen, with CNMI Next Top Chef 2017 winner, chef Laxmi Shrestha, making her traditional Nepalese dishes and some of her famous appetizers for the night.

Marianas Creations's First Friday event on Sept. 3, 2021, at its location on Micro Beach Road, from 6pm to 12am, will also feature Ben "LamLam" San Nicolas and Primitiva Muña who will be singing their songs, said Elina Gharti Chhetri, owner of Marianas Creations.

San Nicolas is a Chamorro recording artist from Agat, Guam. He has recorded three albums—*LamLam fields back Home, Papa Giya Hagat,* and *Expresacion Gi Togeta*—and two new singles *Fakmåta* and *Pångpång i Nåpu*. Muña is an up-and-coming singer-songwriter-music artist who grew up in Inarajan, Guam. However, she has a strong connection to Saipan as her father is from Saipan. They will be performing for the crowd at First Friday.

Several artists, such as Martin Castro Jr., Jakie Fujuhira, James C. Bamba, Antonette Labausa, David and Lani Vinyard, Veronica Celia Mendez-Arriola, Greg Bacnis, and others will have their work and products available during the event.

In addition, Marianas Creations is introducing Steven Van Winkle's woven artwork for display and purchase. His partner, Samisoni Pome'e, and their son, Gerald Mamis, will be representing the artwork and will weave a hat for one lucky participants of the night.

Ben "LamLam" San Nicolas and Primitiva Muña will be performing during the First Friday September. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas Creations will also be serving local drinks, craft beers, handcrafted cocktails, including local liquor from Mariana Breeze, local coffee from Marianas Coffee Co., local kombucha brewed by Conall Kennedy, and locally produced sodas.

Marianas Creations is currently soliciting for artists interested in showcasing their work to contact the shop. Additionally, they are seeking anyone who produces local products to contact the shop.

Marianas Creations is located next to Everest Kitchen and Bridge Capital LLC on Micro Beach Road. They can be reached on Facebook—Marianas Creations, Instagram—marianascreations-saipan, by phone 783-1924, or email marianascreations670@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

Nation

After Ida, small recovery signs amid daunting destruction

Fran Tribe and her dog, Dave, sit outside a home destroyed by Hurricane Ida in Houma, La., on Monday, Aug. 30, 2021. AP

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Lights came back on for a fortunate few, some corner stores opened their doors and crews cleared fallen trees and debris from a growing number of roadways Wednesday—small signs of progress amid the monumental task of repairing the damage inflicted by Hurricane Ida.

Still, suffering remained widespread three days after Ida battered Louisiana and parts of Mississippi as the fifth-most-powerful hurricane to strike the U.S. Some low-lying communities remained largely underwater. Roughly a million homes and businesses still had no electricity, and health officials said more than 600,000 people lacked running water.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said he was pleased that power had returned for some people, saying it was "critically important to show progress" after the storm. But he also acknowledged that much more work lay ahead.

"I'm very mindful that it's a start, and only a start," he told a news conference.

The death toll rose to at least six after a coroner confirmed a 65-year-old woman had drowned in her Louisiana home and police in Maryland said a 19-year-old man was found dead in an apartment complex flooded by heavy rain from Ida's remnants. And the staggering scope of the disaster began to come into focus, with a private firm estimating total damage from Ida could exceed $50 billion.

Edwards said Louisiana was blessed to have only two deaths from Ida so far, given the magnitude of the hurricane's devastation.

In southern Louisiana's Plaquemines Parish, Gayle Lawrence lost two cars, refrigerators and almost everything in her garage to floodwaters. Her garage was filled with marsh grass and dead fish. Scores of other homes in the neighborhood were also flooded.

"The house is solid. It didn't even move. But when the water came up, it destroyed everything," she said.

In Jefferson Parish, hospital staff, food bank employees and other critical workers were hampered by a gas shortage, said parish president Cynthia Lee Sheng. The parish neighbors New Orleans and saw widespread destruction from Ida. Authorities were still waiting for floodwaters to recede enough for trucks carrying food, water and repair supplies to begin moving into Lafitte and other low-lying communities.

"Today we're a broken community. It won't always be that way," Sheng said after meeting with Edwards.

Emergency officials in nearby Terrebonne Parish took to Twitter to caution evacuees considering returning home that "there are no shelters, no electricity, very limited resources for food, gasoline and supplies and absolutely no medical services."

Louisiana's largest hospital system, Ochsner Health, is in conversations with the governor's office about opening a field hospital in the hard-hit Terrebonne and Lafourche parish region because of the closure of most of the hospitals in the area, Ochsner President and CEO Warner Thomas said.

HURRICANE IDA BRIEFS

Report: Man attacked by alligator in Ida's floodwaters

SLIDELL, La. (AP)—A man had his arm ripped off by a large alligator while walking through floodwaters from Hurricane Ida and is now missing, a Louisiana sheriff said. The 71-year-old man's wife told sheriff's deputies that she heard a commotion around noon on Monday, then walked outside to see the gator attacking her husband in the New Orleans suburb of Slidell, the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office said in a statement. According to the woman, the alligator "had him in a death roll," sheriff's Capt. Lance Vitter told The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate. The gator tore off the man's arm, leaving him unconscious, the woman told authorities. When the attack stopped, the man's wife pulled him out of the floodwaters and ran inside to get first aid supplies. When she realized how serious his injuries were, she got into her canoe and paddled to higher ground about a mile away to get help, the sheriff's office said in a statement. When she returned with deputies, he was gone. The sheriff's office, which did not identify the man, said it used high-water vehicles and boats in an attempt to find him, "but all attempts have been futile."

Biden to survey Ida's storm damage in Louisiana on Friday

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden will visit Louisiana on Friday to survey the aftermath of Hurricane Ida and speak with local and state leaders, the White House said. Biden will also deliver a speech Thursday outlining his administration's response to the storm. Ida was the fifth most powerful storm to strike the U.S. when it hit Louisiana on Sunday with maximum winds of 150 mph (240 kph), likely causing tens of billions of dollars in flood, wind and other damage, including to the electrical grid. More than 1 million homes and businesses in Louisiana and Mississippi were without power after Ida toppled a major transmission tower and knocked out thousands of miles of lines and hundreds of substations. New Orleans was plunged into total darkness at one point; power began returning to the city on Wednesday. White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden "absolutely would not" visit Louisiana if his presence would take away from relief efforts. Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards suggested the visit would be crucial for the president to understand the destruction by seeing the widespread damage for himself.

Weather slows California wildfire, but flames keep moving

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, Calif. (AP)—Favorable weather helped firefighters trying to save communities on the south end of Lake Tahoe from an approaching wildfire, but officials warned Wednesday that stiff winds and dry conditions mean that homes in the California-Nevada alpine region are still in danger.

"Finally some good news on the weather side of things here on this fire," Jim Dudley, a meteorologist assigned to the fire, said at an evening briefing. Winds were expected to calm significantly over the next several days, he said, but risks remain with extremely low humidity levels.

The Caldor Fire remained roughly 3 miles (5 kilometers) south of the recently evacuated city of South Lake Tahoe, moving northeast toward the California-Nevada state line, said Henry Herrera, a battalion chief for the agency, which is also known as Cal Fire.

Crews tried desperately to keep flames away from urban communities, where houses are close together and shopping centers, hotels and other structures would provide even more fuel for a fire that so far has been feeding on trees, grasses and scattered homes and cabins.

"We're still not out of the woods. The fire is still moving," Herrera said.

The blaze has been burning toward Lake Tahoe from the southwest along California Highway 50, climbing over a Sierra Nevada summit and descending into the Tahoe Basin.

Thick smoke has enveloped the city of South Lake Tahoe, which is all but deserted at a time when it would normally be swarming with tourists. On Monday, roughly 22,000 residents and thousands of others from neighboring communities jammed the city's main artery for hours after they were ordered to leave.

South Lake Tahoe city officials said only a handful of residents defied the evacuation order.

Meanwhile, officials prepared for the next possible phase of the firefight.

The South Tahoe Public Utility District asked people to turn off hoses, irrigation systems and sprinklers to ensure that wells can pump at full capacity. That means "the minute a firefighter hooks into a hydrant that they are getting full pressure, and as much water as possible is coming out," said Shelly Thomsen, spokeswoman for the utility.

Misspelling of Moderna leads to tourist's arrest in Hawaii

HONOLULU (AP)—A 24-year-old Illinois woman submitted a fake COVID-19 vaccination card to visit Hawaii with a glaring spelling error that led to her arrest: Moderna was spelled "Maderna," according to court documents.

In order to bypass Hawaii's 10-day traveler quarantine, she uploaded a vaccination card to the state's Safe Travels program and arrived in Honolulu Aug. 23 on a Southwest Airlines flight, the documents said.

"Airport screeners found suspicious errors ... such as Moderna was spelled wrong and that her home was in Illinois but her shot was taken at Delaware," Wilson Lau, a special agent with the Hawaii attorney general's investigation division, wrote in an email to a Delaware official who confirmed there was no vaccination record for the woman under her name and birth date.

The email is included in documents filed in court. She was charged with two misdemeanor counts of violating Hawaii's emergency rules to control the spread of COVID-19. She had been in custody on $2,000 bail until a judge released her at a hearing Wednesday and scheduled another hearing in three weeks, according the public defender's office.

State Public Defender James Tabe, whose office represented her at hearings this week, declined to comment on her case, noting it's not clear if she'll hire her own attorney or apply to have a public defender represent her.

The voicemail at a number listed for her in court documents was full Wednesday. She didn't immediately respond to a text message from The Associated Press.

In addition to the suspicious card, authorities determined that the travel information she provided listed she would be staying at a Waikiki Holiday Inn but didn't include a reservation number and return flight information, court documents said.

Asia

India schools cautiously reopen even as COVID warnings grow

NEW DELHI (AP)—More students in India will be able to step inside a classroom for the first time in nearly 18 months Wednesday, as authorities gave the green light to partially reopen more schools despite apprehension from some parents and signs that infections are picking up again.

Schools and colleges in at least six more states are reopening in a gradual manner with health measures in place throughout September. In New Delhi, all staff must be vaccinated and class sizes will be capped at 50% with staggered seating and sanitized desks.

In the capital only students in grades nine through 12 will be allowed to attend at first, though it is not compulsory. Some parents say they will be holding their children back, including Nalini Chauhan, who lost her husband to the coronavirus last year.

A man sanitizes a classroom ahead of the partial reopening of schools in New Delhi, India, Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021. AP

"That trauma is there for us and that is what stops me from going out. We don't go to malls. We don't go shopping. So why schools now?" she said.

Life has been slowly returning to normal in India after the trauma of a ferocious coronavirus surge earlier this year ground life in the country to a halt, sickened tens of millions, and left hundreds of thousands dead. A number of states returned last month to in person learning for some age groups.

Daily new infections have fallen sharply since their peak of more than 400,000 in May. But on Saturday, India recorded 46,000 new cases, the highest in nearly two months.

The uptick has raised questions over reopening schools, with some warning against it. Others say the virus risk to children remains low and opening schools is urgent for poorer students who lack access to the internet, making online learning nearly impossible.

"The simple answer is there is never a right time to do anything during a pandemic," said Jacob John, professor of community medicine at Christian Medical College, Vellore. "There is a risk, but life has to go on—and you can't go on without schools."

Online education remains a privilege in India, where only one in four children have access to the internet and digital devices, according to UNICEF. The virtual classroom has deepened existing inequities, marking the haves from the have-nots, said Shavati Sharma Kukreja of Central Square Foundation, an education non-profit.

"While kids with access to smartphones and laptops have continued their learning with minimal disruption, those less privileged have effectively lost over a year of education," she said.

ASIAN BRIEFS

US extends ban on American passports for travel to NKorea

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration has extended for one year a Trump-era ban on the use of U.S. passports for travel to North Korea. The ban had first been imposed by former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in 2017 after the death of American student Otto Warmbier, who suffered grievous injuries while in North Korean custody. It has been extended annually ever since. The State Department announced the extension of the ban until Aug. 31, 2022, in a Federal Register notice to be published on Thursday. Humanitarian groups have expressed concern about the impact the initial ban and its extensions have had on providing relief to isolated North Korea, which is one of the world's neediest countries. The ban makes it illegal to use a U.S. passport for travel to, from or through North Korea, also known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or the DPRK, unless the document has been specially validated. Such validations are granted by the State Department only in the case of compelling national interest.

Indonesia seizes tanker believed to carry illicit waste oil

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Indonesia's navy has seized a massive tanker believed to be loaded with thousands of tons of wasted black oil and has brought the ship to shore for further investigation, officials said Thursday. The Panamanian-flagged MT Zodiac Star was located Wednesday after the navy received an intelligence tip about a suspicious tanker near Tolop island and escorted it about 22 kilometers (13 miles) to a naval base in Batam on the Indonesian archipelago's southwestern tip near Singapore, said Rear Admiral Arsyad Abdullah, the country's western fleet commander. The 3,224-ton tanker, with its crew of 18 Indonesians and a Malaysian, was suspected of conducting illicit practices after it was caught with about 4,600 tons of waste oil without port clearance and other proper legal documents, Abdullah said in a statement. He said investigators are still consulting with experts and questioning the tanker's captain, crew members and witnesses before the findings are handed over to the prosecutor's office. The charges that could be brought carry up to 5 years in prison and fine of 600 million rupiahs ($42,000), Abdullah said.

Taiwan gets first Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines after long delay

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan received its first batch of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines Thursday after a prolonged purchasing process that gave rise to a political blame game with China. Taiwan had been unable to buy the vaccine itself directly from BioNTech, the German company that had partnered with U.S.-based Pfizer to develop the mRNA vaccine. Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen earlier accused China of blocking Taiwan from getting the Pfizer vaccine through BioNTech, saying that they had all but signed the contracts when the deal was delayed indefinitely. China has denied any interference. Eventually, two private companies, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. and Hon Hai Precision Electronics, as well as a Buddhist organization Tzu Chi, stepped in to buy the vaccines and donate them to Taiwan. The three organizations bought a total of 15 million doses. The flight carrying the first 930,000 doses arrived at Taoyuan International Airport on Thursday morning.

Afghans face hunger crisis, adding to Taliban's challenges

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—The United Nations' stockpiles of food in Afghanistan could run out this month, a senior official warned Wednesday, threatening to add a hunger crisis to the challenges facing the country's new Taliban rulers as they try to restore stability after decades of war.

About one third of the country's population of 38 million doesn't know if they will have a meal every day, according to Ramiz Alakbarov, the U.N.'s humanitarian chief in Afghanistan.

The U.N.'s World Food Program has brought in food and distributed it to tens of thousands of people in recent weeks, but with winter approaching and a drought ongoing, at least $200 million is needed urgently to be able to continue to feed the most vulnerable Afghans, he said.

"By the end of September, the stocks which the World Food Program has in the country will be out," Alakbarov told reporters at a virtual news conference. "We will not be able to provide those essential food items because we'll be out of stocks."

Sal Mohammad, 25, an Afghan man who gathers pieces of iron from the street to sell for scrap, pushes his handcart in Kabul, Afghanistan, Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021. AP

Earlier, U.N. officials said that of the $1.3 billion needed for overall aid efforts, only 39% has been received.

The Taliban, who seized control of the country ahead of the withdrawal of American forces this week, now must govern a nation that relies heavily on international aid and is in the midst of a worsening economic crisis. In addition to the concerns about food supplies, civil servants haven't been paid in months and the local currency is losing value. Most of Afghanistan's foreign reserves are held abroad and currently frozen.

Khalid Payenda, Afghanistan's former acting finance minister, on Wednesday detailed a country existing in a dangerously fragile state.

Speaking at Georgetown University in Washington, Payenda said the Afghan currency had yet to crash because money exchanges had been shuttered. But its value could plunge by more than 100%, said Payenda, who described former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani as withdrawn and paranoid ahead of the Taliban takeover.

"I think the war had a toll on his psyche and he saw everything with suspicion," Payenda said.

Part of the chaos reflects the speed at which the Taliban took control of the country, with Payenda saying he thought the prior government could have been sustained for two or three more years because of commitments by international donors.

"I did not expect it to be this quickly," Payenda said. "Nobody actually did."

World

Gunmen kidnap 73 students in latest attack on Nigeria school

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP)—Gunmen abducted 73 students in yet another school attack in northwestern Nigeria on Wednesday, police said, prompting authorities to close all primary and secondary schools across Zamfara state.

The new kidnappings came just days after three other groups of hostages were freed when large ransom payments were reportedly made, raising hopes that other captives might soon be freed, too.

Attackers descended upon the Government Day Secondary School in the remote village of Kaya around noon Wednesday, local resident Yusuf Mohammed told The Associated Press. The kidnappers then began shooting into the air before taking the students, he said.

Zamfara state police spokesman Mohammed Shehu said an operation was underway to rescue the students.

More than 1,000 students have been kidnapped from schools in northern Nigeria since December. While most pupils ultimately have been released, some have died or been killed in captivity and about 200 remained hostages before Wednesday's attack, according to UNICEF.

Government officials haven't commented on whether they played any role in the hostage releases announced Friday, but it appears parents from at least one of those schools did pay a large ransom.

The head teacher at one of the schools in Niger state told AP that many parents sold most of what they owned in an effort to raise funds totaling more than 30 million naira (about $72,900). The Salihu Tanko Islamiya School also sold off a piece of land where they had planned an expansion project, he added.

Those 90 pupils freed were the youngest hostages ever taken from a school in Nigeria, with children as young as 4 taken into the remote forests by gunmen and held for three months without their parents. One child, who hasn't been identified, died during the ordeal, authorities said last week.

It remains unclear whether the kidnappers of the three separate hostage groups last week are connected or if the simultaneous releases were merely coincidental. Each took place in a different state and they involved students of varying ages.

Authorities so far have blamed this year's spate of kidnappings on "bandits," or criminals operating out of remote, forested areas of northern Nigeria. Most of the gunmen are believed to be young men from the Fulani ethnic group who had traditionally worked as nomadic cattle herders before turning to the profitable crime of abducting children for ransom.

Mexico sees easing of third COVID-19 wave

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Israel Buendía sat up in the bed closest to the window, a machine forcing oxygen into his nose. He'd been at the Hospital Ajusco Medio for two weeks and now he was marveling at the sound of his own voice.

Just last Friday, Buendía had felt good too. He bathed, walked the hall a bit. Then he started to cough and couldn't stop. By the afternoon, doctors had positioned him facedown in bed to ease his breathing. He spit blood.

"He was about to be intubated," Dr. Susana Valdez, head of internal medicine, said this week.

Such is the roller coaster of COVID-19 for many patients. The pandemic has played out in similar peaks and valleys in Mexico over the past year and half. The country is now in the middle of its third wave of infections, a surge that began in mid-June and is just beginning to show signs of easing.

Ajusco Medio sits in a mountainside neighborhood on Mexico City's south side. Designated early on to handle only COVID-19 patients, the public hospital has treated more than 62,000. On Tuesday, its intensive care unit was at 99% capacity. The 96-bed temporary hospital wing that it built in the hospital's parking deck below the main tower was at 99.6% capacity, with one open bed.

There, bed after bed of COVID-19 patients were monitored by doctors and nurses, specialists and even a psychologist. Some waited for a bed in the tower to open, while others hoped they would never have to receive that higher-level care.

That temporary wing—the staff call it the UTAM—was not supposed to house intubated patients, just those receiving high-volume oxygen like Buendía up in the tower, but on Tuesday intubated patients abounded.

Health workers treat patients at the Ajusco Medio General Hospital which is designated for COVID-19 cases only, in Mexico City, Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2021.

"There shouldn't be tubes here," hospital director Dr. Jesús Ortiz said during a walk through the UTAM. "The (UTAM) wasn't made for more than high-flow points, however the aggressiveness of the (infection) curve beat us."

Most of the patients now filling Ajusco Medio's beds arrived in a wave two weeks ago or more. The staff was encouraged that this week new admissions had slowed. "It appears we are in the decline of the pandemic curve," Ortiz said.

Still, patients were trickling in from other parts of the sprawling city and even other states, drawn by the hospital's hard-earned reputation as a place where COVID-19 patients got better.

Assistant Health Secretary Hugo López-Gatell, the Mexican government's pandemic point person, confirmed as much Tuesday.

"The epidemic curve of estimated cases began to decline a month ago and today we have clear signs that it is in a process of reduction and we anticipate that that reduction is going to continue over the coming weeks," he said during President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's daily news conference.

Pope inadvertently quotes Putin to chide West's Afghan war

MADRID (AP)—Pope Francis has criticized the West's two-decade-long involvement in Afghanistan as an outsider's attempt to impose democracy—although he did it by citing Russian President Vladimir Putin while thinking he was quoting German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Pope Francis

Asked during a radio interview aired Wednesday about the new political map taking shape in Afghanistan after the United States and its allies withdrew from the Taliban-controlled country following 20 years of war, the pope said he would answer with a quote that he attributed to Merkel, whom he described as "one of the world's greatest political figures."

"It is necessary to put an end to the irresponsible policy of intervening from outside and building democracy in other countries, ignoring the traditions of the peoples," the pope said, using his own translation into Spanish.

But the words were spoken last month by Putin in the presence of Merkel, during her visit to Moscow.

During the meeting on Aug. 20, Putin scathingly criticized the West over Afghanistan, saying that the Taliban's rapid sweep over the country has shown the futility of Western attempts to enforce its own vision of democracy. At a news conference with Putin, Merkel conceded that the operation had failed in delivering a clear future for Afghans.

"We did not want to force any system on Afghanistan," Merkel told reporters. "But we saw that millions of girls were glad to go to school and that women could participate. There are many in Afghanistan who are very, very unhappy about developments now."

Her spokesman, Steffen Seibert, refused to comment directly on the pope's comments when asked on Wednesday, but he added that Merkel's position on Afghanistan was well known and repeated during a recent speech to the German parliament.

The goal of no international terror attacks from Afghanistan since the military operation started in 2001 "was achieved," Merkel told German lawmakers on Aug. 25: "That was a concrete contribution to the safety of our country."

Rebels kidnap 20 in east Congo after ambushing convoy

BENI, Congo (AP)—Rebels in eastern Congo ambushed a stalled civilian convoy that was under military escort Wednesday, killing five people and abducting dozens of hostages initially. About 20 people remained missing hours later, the army said.

The attack took place after the convoy had stopped to repair one of the vehicles, Capt. Jules Ngongo, spokesman for the Congolese army in Ituri province, told The Associated Press.

Initially the gunmen kidnapped 80 people but he said the army was able to soon rescue 60 of them.

"We call on people to remain calm and to trust their army because it is difficult to fight the terrorists, but we will fight for peace to return as soon as possible," Ngongo said.

The latest attack, though, prompted more outcry in eastern Congo, where civilians say the rebel group known as ADF is stepping up its attacks.

"What is the purpose of our army? How can a convoy of civilian vehicles be attacked when they were secured by the army? Without capturing even one rebel?" said Christian Munyanderu, coordinator of a local human rights group.

The ADF, or Allied Democratic Forces rebels, trace their origins to nearby Uganda and have long carried out attacks in eastern Congo, at times bringing gunfire to the city center of Beni.

The ongoing attacks there have repeatedly prompted anger about the inability of the Congolese army and U.N. peacekeepers to stop the violence.

Fears have deepened ever since ADF reportedly pledged its allegiance to the Islamic State organization though the exact ties between the two groups remain murky.

Islamic State's Central Africa Province claimed a suicide bombing at a busy intersection in Beni earlier this year. The Ugandan man died, but no one else was killed in that blast believed to be the first of its kind in eastern Congo.

Off the Wall

Michigan truck hauling bee hives crashes, unleashing swarm

BOYNE CITY, Mich. (AP)—A truck hauling bee hives crashed and overturned along a northern Michigan roadway, unleashing a big swarm of bees, police said.

The truck overturned about 2 p.m. Wednesday and dumped its load of bee boxes along a Charlevoix County road, prompting police to urge residents to keep windows and doors closed.

"There was a very large swarm," Charlevoix County Sheriff Charles Vondra said Thursday.

He said he was told that upwards of 50 million bees were in the truck's load of bee boxes when it crashed near Boyne City, a community about 260 miles (418.4 kilometers) northwest of Detroit.

Local firefighters sprayed water on the boxes to keep the insects cool in the heat of the day until beekeepers could arrive and begin retrieving the hive-filled boxes and loading them onto trucks that hauled them away, he said.

Vondra said it's estimated that several hundred thousand bees never made it back into the boxes. But bee boxes were placed Thursday morning at the crash site in hopes that some would fly back into those boxes for removal, he said.

No residents were stung by the bees, but Vondra said some beekeepers got stung while they were collecting and loading the boxes onto trucks that removed them from the scene.

Australian mourns beloved aunt with heart-shaped love ewes

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—An Australian farmer couldn't go to his aunt's funeral because of pandemic restrictions so he paid his respects with a novel alternative: dozens of sheep arranged in the shape of a love heart.

Drone-shot video of pregnant ewes munching barley in a paddock while unwittingly expressing Ben Jackson's affection for his beloved Auntie Deb was viewed by mourners at her funeral in the city of Brisbane in Queensland state this week.

Jackson was locked down at the time across a state border at his farm in Guyra in New South Wales state, 430 kilometers (270 miles) away.

"It took me a few goes to get it right ... and the final result is what you see. That was as close to a heart as I could get it," Jackson said on Thursday.

Jackson started experimenting with making shapes with sheep to relieve the monotonous stress of hand-feeding livestock during a devastating drought across most of Australia that broke in the early months of the pandemic.

He discovered that if he spelled the names of his favorite musical bands with grain dropped from the back of a truck that the flock would roughly adopt the same shape for several minutes. "It certainly lifted my spirits back in the drought," Jackson said.

In this image taken from video, sheep form the shape of a heart in a field in Guyra, northern New South Wales, Australia, Thursday, Aug. 5, 2021. Ben Jackson, a sheep farmer stuck in lockdown, was unable to attend his aunt's funeral, has honored her memory with the ultimate tribute, sheep organized in the shape of a love heart.

BEN JACKSON VIA AP

"This heart that I've done for my auntie, it certainly seems like it's had a bit of an effect across Australia," he added, referring to emotional social media responses.

"Maybe we all just need to give ourselves a big virtual hug," he said.

Jackson said he was lucky to have any grain left on his property after a mouse plague this year that followed the drought.

He continues to supplement the pregnant ewes' diet with grain to improve their condition before they give birth.

Cougar that was kept as illegal pet removed from NYC home

NEW YORK (AP)—An 80-pound cougar was removed from a New York City apartment where she was being kept illegally as a pet, animal welfare officials said Monday.

The owner of the 11-month-old female cougar surrendered the animal on Thursday, Kelly Donithan, director of animal disaster response for the Humane Society of the United States, said in a news release.

The cougar, nicknamed Sasha, spent the weekend at the Bronx Zoo receiving veterinary care and is now headed to the Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas, officials said.

The Humane Society coordinated with zoo officials, the state Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York Police Department on the big cat's removal.

"I've never seen a cougar in the wild, but I've seen them on leashes, smashed into cages, and crying for their mothers when breeders rip them away," the Humane Society's Donithan said. "I've also seen the heartbreak of owners, like in this case, after being sold not just a wild animal, but a false dream that they could make a good 'pet.'"

This photo provided by New York's Bronx Zoo shows an 11-month-old, 80-pound cougar that was removed from an apartment, in the Bronx borough of New York, where she was being kept illegally as a pet, animal welfare officials said Monday, Aug. 30, 2021.

COURTESY OF THE BRONX ZOO VIA AP

Donithan said this cougar was relatively lucky because her owners, who live in the Bronx, recognized that a wild cat is not fit to live in an apartment and surrendered her.

"The owner's tears and nervous chirps from the cougar as we drove her away painfully drives home the many victims of this horrendous trade and myth that wild animals belong anywhere but the wild," Donithan said.

Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos said that while cougars "may look cute and cuddly when young, these animals can grow up to be unpredictable and dangerous."

Bronx Zoo director Jim Breheny said the exotic pet trade makes no contribution to the conservation of endangered species.

"These animals often end up in very bad situations, kept by private individuals who don't have the resources, facilities, knowledge, or expertise to provide for the animals' most basic needs," Breheny said. "In addition to these welfare concerns for the animals, the keeping of big cats by private people poses a real safety hazard to the owner, the owner's family and the community at large."

New York has seen other notable cases involving dangerous animals in private residences, including Ming, a 400-pound tiger that was removed from a Harlem apartment in 2003.

Ming's owner, Antoine Yates, was arrested and sentenced to five months in prison for reckless endangerment. Ming died in 2019 at the Noah's Lost Ark Exotic Animal Rescue Center in Ohio.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Spotted: Cow at a McDonald's drive-through in Wisconsin

MARSHFIELD, Wis. (AP)—Spotted in a car at a McDonald's drive-through in Wisconsin: A cow—all of it. Jessica Nelson of Mosinee pulled into the drive-through at a McDonald's in Marshfield on Thursday and said she looked up to see a cow in the backseat of a Buick sedan three cars ahead of her. "I thought it was fake at first. Who puts a cow in a Buick?" she told The Associated Press on Friday. "Then its whole head moved." She quickly picked up her phone and shot video of the bovine. "I just took the video of it because I was blown away there was a cow in the back of a Buick," she said. She posted the video on her Facebook page with the caption "A WHOLE FREAKING COW!!! Tell me you live in Wisconsin without telling me you live in Wisconsin." She also pasted a message on the video itself that read "That's a whole (expletive) cow in the back of that car!" By Friday afternoon the video had gotten 112,000 views.

Jersey Shore landmark Lucy the Elephant to get new skin

MARGATE, N.J. (AP)—The beach-side landmark, Lucy the Elephant, is having all of its metal skin replaced because more than 50% of its exterior has degraded beyond repair. The six-story high elephant statue in Margate, New Jersey, will close Sept. 20 after architects determined it would be more cost effective to replace the metal siding than to try to restore it, according to Richard Helfant, executive director of the Save Lucy Committee. Built in 1881, Lucy was saved from demolition and moved a short distance from its original location in 1970. The National Historic Landmark on the Jersey Shore is one of the oldest roadside attractions in the country. The new overhaul will cost $1.4 million and is funded in part by a grant from the Preserve New Jersey Preservation Fund administered by the New Jersey Historic Trust, Helfant said Tuesday. During restorations, a weatherproof scaffolding will be built around Lucy.

Woman using gun's laser sight to play with cat shoots friend

KENOSHA, Wis. (AP)—A Wisconsin woman accidentally shot a friend while using the laser sight on a handgun to play with a cat, authorities said. A criminal complaint charging the 19-year-old woman with negligent use of a weapon said she was visiting a Kenosha apartment on Tuesday afternoon where a 21-year-old man had brought a handgun. The woman, who a witness said had been drinking, picked up the handgun, "turned on the laser sight and was pointing it at the floor to get the cat to chase it," when the gun went off, the complaint filed Thursday said. The man, who was standing in a doorway, was shot in the thigh, authorities said. He left and went into another apartment, where police found him after responding to a 911 call, the Kenosha News reported. A tourniquet was applied to his leg to stop the bleeding before he was taken to a hospital. There's no word on his condition, but authorities said he was facing charges for violating bond conditions that prevented him from having a weapon.

Bear cub strolls aisles at Southern California supermarket

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Shoppers were startled last weekend to see a bear cub browsing the offerings at a Los Angeles supermarket. Video aired by CBS 2 shows the small bear strolling the aisles on Saturday at the Ralphs store in the Porter Ranch area of the San Fernando Valley. After sniffing around inside, the bear eventually walked out the front doors. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife found the 120-pound (54-kilogram) animal hiding under a trailer at a construction site behind a nearby Walmart. The bear was tranquilized and released into the Angeles National Forest, the department said.

Library book returned after 50 years with $20 bill

PLYMOUTH, Pa. (AP)—A book checked out a half-century ago has been anonymously returned to a library in northeastern Pennsylvania, officials said. The Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice reports that the 1967 copy of "Coins You Can Collect" by Burton Hobson arrived last month at the Plymouth Public Library in Luzerne County along with a $20 bill. An accompanying unsigned letter, written as if by the book itself, said "Fifty years ago (yes 50!), a little girl checked me out of this library in 1971. At this time, she didn't know they were going to move from Plymouth. Back then, kids weren't told things like that. "As you can see, she took very good care of me," the letter continued, explaining that it was packed away often for frequent moves but was "always with many other books." The writer, speaking in her own voice rather than as the book, then says she often intended to send the book back but somehow never got around to it. "This became a running joke in my family. Each time we moved, they always asked me if I packed 'the Plymouth Book,'" she wrote.

Science & Technology

UN: Weather disasters soar in numbers, cost, but deaths fall

GENEVA (AP)—Weather disasters are striking the world four to five times more often and causing seven times more damage than in the 1970s, the United Nations weather agency reports.

But these disasters are killing far fewer people. In the 1970s and 1980s, they killed an average of about 170 people a day worldwide. In the 2010s, that dropped to about 40 per day, the World Meteorological Organization said in a report Wednesday that looks at more than 11,000 weather disasters in the past half-century.

The report comes during a disaster-filled summer globally, including deadly floods in Germany and a heat wave in the Mediterranean, and with the United States simultaneously struck by powerful Hurricane Ida and an onslaught of drought-worsened wildfires.

"The good news is that we have been able to minimize the amount of casualties once we have started having growing amount of disasters: heatwaves, flooding events, drought, and especially ... intense tropical storms like Ida, which has been hitting recently Louisiana and Mississippi in the United States," Petteri Taalas, WMO's secretary-general, told a news conference.

In this Monday, Aug. 30, 2021, file photo, people are evacuated from floodwaters in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida in LaPlace, La.

AP PHOTO/GERALD HERBERT

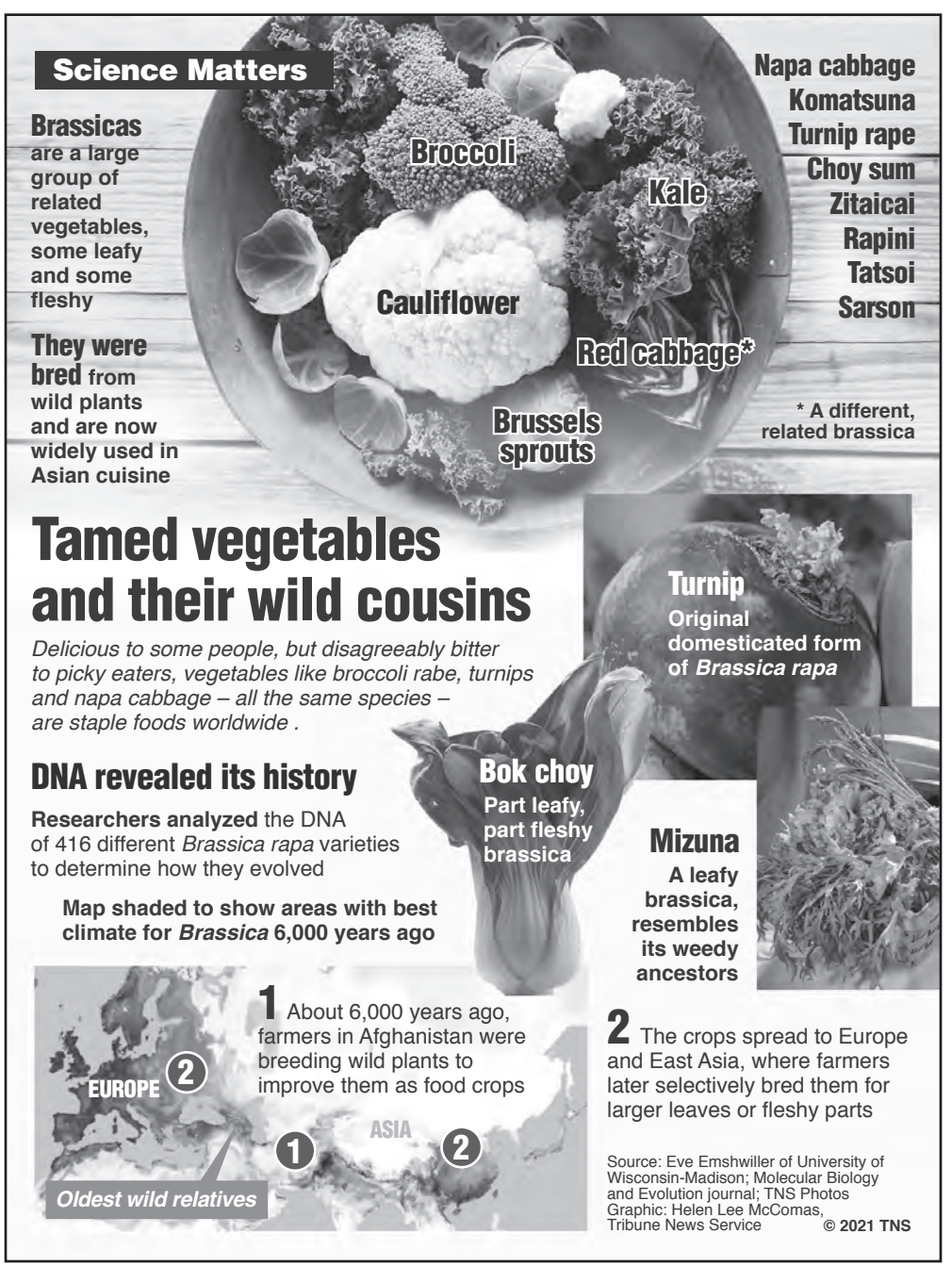
"But the bad news is that the economic losses have been growing very rapidly and this growth is supposed to continue," he added. "We are going to see more climatic extremes because of climate change, and these negative trends in climate will continue for the coming decades."

In the 1970s, the world averaged about 711 weather disasters a year, but from 2000 to 2009 that was up to 3,536 a year or nearly 10 a day, according to the report, which used data from the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters in Belgium. The average number of yearly disasters dropped a bit in the 2010s to 3,165, the report said.

Most death and damage during 50 years of weather disasters came from storms, flooding and drought.

More than 90% of the more than 2 million deaths are in what the U.N. considers developing nations, while nearly 60% of the economic damage occurred in richer countries.

In the 1970s, weather disasters cost about $175 billion globally, when adjusted to 2019 dollars, the U.N. found. That increased to $1.38 trillion for the period from 2010 to 2019.


Science Matters
Brassicas are a large group of related vegetables, some leafy and some fleshy
They were bred from wild plants and are now widely used in Asian cuisine
Broccoli
Kale
Cauliflower
Red cabbage*
Brussels sprouts
Napa cabbage
Komatsuna
Turnip rape
Choy sum
Zitaicai
Rapini
Tatsoi
Sarson
* A different, related brassica
Tamed vegetables and their wild cousins
Delicious to some people, but disagreeably bitter to picky eaters, vegetables like broccoli rabe, turnips and napa cabbage – all the same species – are staple foods worldwide .
DNA revealed its history
Researchers analyzed the DNA of 416 different Brassica rapa varieties to determine how they evolved
Map shaded to show areas with best climate for Brassica 6,000 years ago
EUROPE
ASIA
Oldest wild relatives
1 About 6,000 years ago, farmers in Afghanistan were breeding wild plants to improve them as food crops
2 The crops spread to Europe and East Asia, where farmers later selectively bred them for larger leaves or fleshy parts
Turnip
Original domesticated form of Brassica rapa
Bok choy
Part leafy, part fleshy brassica
Mizuna
A leafy brassica, resembles its weedy ancestors
Source: Eve Emshwiller of University of Wisconsin-Madison; Molecular Biology and Evolution journal; TNS Photos
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service
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Once green, prehistoric Arabia drew early humans from Africa

WASHINGTON (AP)—Huw Groucutt passes rolling sand dunes as far as his eye can see when traveling to archaeological sites in the northern Arabian Peninsula. But the same desert regions were once intermittently lush and green, attracting early humans and large animals such as hippopotamuses migrating out of Africa to linger at ancient lakes, new evidence suggests.

Until a decade ago, the Arabian Peninsula was a blank spot on the map for scientists trying to reconstruct the story of early human evolution and movements out of Africa. Much more is known about early human settlements in the Levant region—modern-day Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and parts of Syria—where extensive archaeological research has been carried out for more than a century.

But the Arabian Peninsula may have also played an important role as a bridge between Africa and Eurasia, a study published Wednesday in the journal Nature suggests.

Another solution to prevent Facebook hack is an authenticator app

TECH Q&A

By STEVE ALEXANDER
Star Tribune

Email tech questions to Steve Alexander at steve.j.alexander@gmail.com. Please include a full name, city and phone number.

I recently wrote about how to reclaim your Facebook account after it's been hacked (see tinyurl.com/4yucraay). But several readers said it's not so easy to recover a Facebook account.

They report that the recovery process Facebook offers its users is slow and sometimes doesn't work at all. There's no fix I can suggest for that, because Facebook is in control of when or if it returns hacked Facebook accounts to users. But I can suggest a way to reduce your chances of being hacked, or to improve your chances of account recovery if you are hacked: Add an "authenticator app" to the device on which you log in to Facebook.

When an authenticator app is set up with a website like Facebook (see tinyurl.com/46ufkfhu), it adds a layer of security that you won't even notice. You'll log in to the Facebook site with your username and password as usual, and Facebook will recognize both you and the device you're using (computer, phone or tablet). The authenticator app only comes into play if someone tries to log into your Facebook account using an unrecognized device. Facebook then creates a temporary passcode (it lasts only 30 seconds) that's based on some authentication standards and the time of day—but Facebook won't tell anyone what that code is.

If the person using the unrecognized device is you, your authenticator app will calculate the same code in the same way, then display it so that you can type it onto the Facebook page. When the codes match, your identity has been "authenticated" and Facebook will allow you to sign in.

But if the person using the unrecognized device is a hacker (who has stolen your username and password), he or she won't have the temporary passcode and won't be allowed to sign in.

Wait a minute, you say. Isn't this just a fancy description for the "two-factor authentication" that Facebook already offers—the company will text you a verification code that you can type into the website to prove your identity?

No. While authenticator apps are a form of "two-factor authentication," they're much safer than a texted Facebook verification code.

Why? A texted verification code can be intercepted by a hacker who imitates your cell phone number and thus receives all your text messages. Without that texted verification code, it's hard to prove who you are. As a result, you might be locked out of your Facebook account forever.

Authenticator apps get around this problem by letting you generate your own verification code. That makes you less likely to be hacked, and more likely to recover your account if you are.

Some well-known free authenticator apps include Authy, Google Authenticator, Microsoft Authenticator (see tinyurl.com/3724eevx).

■■■

Q: I'd like to use a Dell OptiPlex 980 PC with Windows 10 as a home media server that would send photos, music and videos to another PC, two iPads and two iPhones. I'd also like to able to access it remotely over the internet when I travel, and to have at least password protection. Can you suggest some free, or at least inexpensive, media server software that can do all that?

A: Most media center programs won't work for you because they're TV-centric—they send TV or internet video to other devices, or send your files to a TV. You need the rare program that just redirects just your personal files from a server to a computer, phone or tablet.

There are a couple of programs that might fit your needs. Check out the free MediaPortal (see tinyurl.com/ytvsn4rk) software that runs on Windows, or Emby (see tinyurl.com/54fyv2cs), which costs $5 a month, and runs on the Windows, Mac and Linux operating systems.

Life & Style

Wine spat: Italy heir accuses Sting of slander, flat apology

MILAN (AP)—The heir of a late duke who sold Sting his Tuscan winery 25 years ago says the singer has hit a flat note with a lame apology for comments the family deems slanderous.

The juicy celebrity dispute has spilled onto the pages of Italian newspapers. Sting told the weekly magazine "Sette" on Aug. 13 that he was persuaded into buying the Palagio winery near Florence in 1997 after tasting an "excellent" glass of red wine offered by the owner, Simone Vincenzo Velluti Zati di San Clemente. The singer, however, said it later turned out that the wine was a Barolo from Italy's Piedmont region, and not a local Tuscan Chianti at all.

The magazine labeled the move "a hoax" and claimed the singer "had been tricked" into the purchase.

Sting, in the interview, said he only realized the truth about the wine's origins after he had purchased the Palagio estate, including its vineyards, and he noticed guests pouring the Palagio red into the bushes rather than drinking it. He said he and his wife became determined to "avenge" themselves by producing "an excellent wine also from the Palagio vineyards."

The 45-year-old son of the duke, who died in 2012 at 86, wrote a long, stinging rebuke to Sting's accusations, calling them "slander, poisonous and completely false."

Simone Vincenzo Velluti Zati said it would have been completely out of character for his father to have passed off Barolo for Chianti, and said Sting's use of the interview and the anecdote to promote a new organic pizzeria on the estate was "in poor taste."

In his letter, Velluti Zati said Sting's allegations "not only do not respond to the truth, they are highly damaging to the memory of my father and to my reputation."

Sting responded with a letter on Aug. 24, which was obtained by The Associated Press, offering his "sincere and unequivocal apologies," and acknowledging that the story "as reported was disrespectful to the memory of your distinguished father."

Mike Richards is out as producer of 'Jeopardy!' and 'Wheel'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Mike Richards is out as executive producer of "Jeopardy!", days after he exited as the quiz show's newly appointed host because of past misogynistic and disparaging comments.

Richards is also no longer executive producer of "Wheel of Fortune," according to a memo to staff that was confirmed by Sony Pictures Television, which produces both of the shows.

"We had hoped that when Mike stepped down from the host position at Jeopardy! it would have minimized the disruption and internal difficulties we have all experienced these last few weeks. That clearly has not happened," Suzanne Prete, an executive with the game shows, said in the memo.

The lag between Richards' Aug. 20 decision to step down as host and Sony's announcement Tuesday was filled with speculation about why the studio was keeping him on. "Jeopardy!" fans called him unsuitable for the venerated show, and there were reports of dissatisfaction by staffers.

"Richards has been perceived as damaged goods since the moment the scandal broke," said crisis public relations expert Eden Gillott, referring to Richards' podcast remarks. "It's surprising that Sony kept Richards on as executive producer for as long as it did."

Richards

In her memo, Prete said she will work with Richards' interim replacement, Michael Davies, until further notice. Davies produces ABC's "Who Wants to Be A Millionaire."

James Holzhauer, a "Jeopardy!" champion who mocked Richards when he surrendered the host job, weighed in Tuesday.

"Do I think Mike Richards's podcast comments were appropriate for polite society? No. But did he deserve the benefit of the doubt for the job he did running Jeopardy? Also no," Holzhauer tweeted.

The short-lived Richards era caught the attention of comedian and TV host W. Kamau Bell (CNN's "United Shades of America").

"I really want the "Tiger King" style documentary on this whole thing," Bell posted on Twitter.

Richards had signed an overall development deal with Sony in 2019, and was announced as executive producer of "Jeopardy!" and "Wheel of Fortune" in May 2020.

He quickly became controversial when he went from behind-the-scenes to Sony's pick for host of "Jeopardy!"—even before his 2013-14 podcast comments demeaning women and making stereotypical remarks about Asian, Jews and others surfaced.

Anointing Richards as successor to the admired Alex Trebek was a questionable choice to some, especially since the studio had conducted a splashy search with guest hosts that included actors, sports figures, journalists—and Richards.

Questions were raised about whether Richards had put his finger on the scale in favor of himself, and whether he had the gravitas that was seen in other candidates, such as fan favorite LeVar Burton. The decision to bypass a person of color or a woman for the flagship show also was criticized, although guest host Mayim Bialik was named host for primetime "Jeopardy!" specials.

The episodes that Richards taped during his short tenure as host are scheduled to air when the show returns for its 38th season starting Sept. 13; a do-over with a substitute host would be a slap at the contestants and further undermine the show.

Richards largely had game and reality shows on his resume, but "Jeopardy!" is widely regarded as something more: A contest that adheres to civility and is won on the basis of knowledge, and which had long been stewarded by the dignified Trebek. He died in November 2020 at age 80, shortly after taping his final shows.

Richards' comments on his "The Randumb Show" podcast were reported by The Ringer website, and the ensuing furor prompted him to announce that staying on as host would be "too much of a distraction for our fans" and wrong for the show.

On the podcast, Richards used derogatory, crude language about women and their bodies and disparaged the homeless, among others.

A Celebration of Life

†Francisco Xavier Deleon Guerrero Tudela

Also known as "FRANK"
Born to Life: December 05, 1930 – Called to Eternal Life: August 31, 2021

In his new life, he now joins his:
Parents: †Enrique & Maria Tudela
Brother & Sisters: †Fridolin DLG. & Esperanza Songao
†Vicenta S. & Gabriel Quitugua
†Victorino & Maria Deleon Guerrero
†Pablo DLG. Tudela
†Francesca DLG. Tudela

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his:
Children: †Henry D. & Carmen S. Tudela
Helen T. & Steven Eavansan
Ricky D. & Clarissa Q. Tudela
Francine & Murphy H. Paul
Joseph D. Tudela

Step Children: Emlok (Alan) & †Erwin Zacharias
Stephen & Barbara Lipton

Sister & In–law: Trinidad & †Antonio Santos

He will also be missed by his numerous relatives and friends.

Daily mass of Intentions are being celebrated each evening at Santa Soledad Church in Kagman at 6:00p.m. and at 10:30a.m. on Sunday.

Funeral Services will be held on Thursday, September 09, 2021. Our beloved **†Frank** will be escorted from Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel to Santa Soledad Church at 7:30 am. Responso service will be at 8:00 am followed by Holy Rosary.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00 am followed by interment service at Sanctuario Pax Memorial Garden in Kagman, where he will be laid to a peaceful rest.

Thank you, Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Kalangan

The Family

In Humble Gratitude

† *Jose San Nicolas Muna*

Born to Life on September 03, 1945
Was called to eternal rest on August 14, 2021

During these moments as we grief the loss of our dearly beloved father, grandfather and great grandfather, we thank God for relatives and friends from near and far, who embraced us with their outpouring love, care, kindness and support during our greatest and most painful time of sorrow.

Your thoughtful prayers, comfort, and unending support and other considerate acts of grace did much to calm the ache in our hearts and may time lessen our pain as memories gently turn tears to smile. We acknowledge and cherish the time you devoted to us. Your kindness has touched us all and we will forever remember you in our thoughts and prayers.

Thank You, Si Yu'us Ma'ase and May God Bless Us All.

Soledad C. Muna (Darlene), Children ,
Grandchildren, Great-Grandson & Family

R. Kelly accuser says he kept gun nearby while berating her

NEW YORK (AP)—One of R. Kelly's accusers testified on Wednesday that he kept a gun by his side while he berated her as a prelude to forcing her to give him oral sex in a Los Angeles music studio.

"He had a weapon, so I wasn't going to step out of line," the witness said while recounting the 2018 episode at the R&B singer's New York City sex-trafficking trial.

Later in the day, the jury also heard brief testimony from a pastor who secretly wed Kelly and budding musical artist Aaliyah when she was 15 years old. He described publicly for the first time how they wore matching "jogging suits"—each with one pant leg pulled up—for a 10-minute ceremony at a Chicago-area hotel.

The previous witness said that at the time she spotted Kelly with a gun, he demanded to know, "How many men have you seen naked?" He also instructed her to act "excited like a puppy" whenever she saw him, adding, "I still have a lot to teach you."

She testified the last time she saw Kelly at a New York City hotel suite, she resisted having sex with him. She said he responded by warning her not to defy him, saying, "I'm a f—-ing legend."

Kelly's alleged intimidation tactics were all part of an abusive sexual relationship that started when the woman was 19 and resulted in her getting herpes from him, she said. After she filed police reports and sued him for failing to disclose an STD, he and his supporters threatened that they would release nude photos and other compromising material about her if she persisted with her allegations, she said.

The woman testified while only using her first name to protect her privacy.

The pastor, Nathan Edmond, testified he was recruited to marry Kelly and Aaliyah in 1994 as a favor for a friend after he was shown a marriage license claiming she was 18. He said he didn't recognize the groom or the bride, who was wearing her hair down over her face.

"I didn't know it was anyone special," Edmond said.

Prosecutors say Kelly wanted to use the marriage, which was later annulled, to shield himself from criminal charges related to having sex with a minor and to prevent her from testifying against him.

Aaliyah, whose full name was Aaliyah Dana Haughton, worked with Kelly, who wrote and produced her 1994 debut album, "Age Ain't Nothing But A Number." She died in a plane crash in 2001 at age 22.

Kelly, 54, has repeatedly denied accusations that he preyed on victims during a 30-year career. His lawyers have portrayed his accusers as groupies who are lying about their relationships with him.

The trial has so far featured a steady stream of accusers claiming Kelly began sexually degrading them when they were still in their teens. They said he used his stardom to lure them into an insular world where he watched their every move and doled out perverse punishments, spanking them and isolating them in hotel rooms if they broke a vow to never speak about him to anyone else.

Kelly's personal physician has also testified, saying he treated him for herpes for several years.

The trial is unfolding under coronavirus precautions restricting the press and the public to overflow courtrooms with video feeds. That's made it difficult to discern the reactions of Kelly, who has been jailed since his federal indictment was announced in 2019.

No charges for Britney Spears in dispute with housekeeper

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP)—Britney Spears will face no charges after an allegation from her housekeeper that Spears slapped a phone out of her hand, prosecutors said Wednesday.

Spears

A possible misdemeanor battery charge was declined based on insufficient evidence that a crime had occurred and lack of injury to the housekeeper or of significant damage to the phone, Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko said in a statement.

The woman had called authorities after the Aug. 16 dispute with Spears over veterinary care of Spears' dog, Nasarenko said.

Spears has a home in Thousand Oaks, California northwest of Los Angeles.

When it was revealed sheriff's deputies were investigating, Spears attorney Mathew Rosen called the incident "overblown" and "manufactured," saying, "Anyone can make an accusation but this should have been closed immediately."

The district attorney's announcement came a day after Rosen and Spears filed new documents alleging that her father was keeping his role in the conservatorship that has controlled her life and money for 13 years because he was trying to earn some $2 million more in fees.

James Spears' representatives did not respond to a request for comment, but have repeatedly said that his dealings in the conservatorship have always been upright and in the best interests of his daughter.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Police: Florida man killed Texas Instagram influencer

HOUSTON (AP)—An Instagram influencer from Texas has been found dead in her apartment and the Florida man investigators believe killed her then stabbed himself to death, authorities said. The body of Jenae Gagnier, 33, was found in her apartment in Richmond, Texas, on Sunday. Known online as Miss Mercedes Morr, she had amassed 2.6 million followers on Instagram. Gagnier's father told multiple news outlets that he rushed to his daughter's apartment on Sunday, concerned that he had been unable to reach her on the phone all weekend. "I know my daughter and when I got to my daughter's house and it was locked up and she's not answering my phone call, which is not like her, I knew something was up. So I didn't hesitate to kick the door down," said Mark Gagnier. "What I saw, I wouldn't want any parent to go through." He found his daughter dead at the bottom of the stairs. "I walk in and Janae's on the floor, and her clothes are all torn up and stuff," Gagnier said. The Medical Examiner's office determined Gagnier died by "strangulation and traumatic concussion."

Not guilty plea entered for Marilyn Manson on misdemeanors

LACONIA, N.H. (AP)—An attorney has entered a not guilty plea on behalf of musical artist Marilyn Manson, who is accused of approaching a videographer at his 2019 concert in New Hampshire and allegedly spitting and blowing his nose on her. Manson, whose legal name is Brian Hugh Warner, surrendered in July to police in Los Angeles in connection with a 2019 arrest warrant in the case. The allegations were detailed in a police affidavit that was released along with a criminal complaint. Manson was charged with two misdemeanor counts of simple assault stemming from the alleged altercation on Aug. 19, 2019, at the Bank of New Hampshire Pavilion in Gilford. The misdemeanor charges can each result in a jail sentence of less than a year and a $2,000 fine if convicted. An arraignment hearing on the charges was scheduled for Thursday, but an attorney for Manson filed the not guilty plea and a wavier of arraignment in Laconia District Court. A case status hearing has been scheduled for Dec. 27.

UK regulator clears Piers Morgan over comments on Meghan

LONDON (AP)—Britain's media regulator on Wednesday cleared TV personality and journalist Piers Morgan of any violations for making comments about Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, that drew more than 50,000 viewer complaints, the largest number ever received by the watchdog agency. The Office of Communications, known as Ofcom, said Morgan did not breach the broadcasting code when he said on "Good Morning Britain" that he did not believe what Meghan said during an interview with Oprah Winfrey in which the duchess said she had suicidal thoughts while struggling to fit in with the monarchy. "This is a resounding victory for free speech and a resounding defeat for Princess Pinocchios. Do I get my job back?" Morgan, 56, tweeted in response to the Ofcom decision. Meghan, who before she married Prince Harry in May 2018 was an American actress known as Meghan Markle, told Winfrey that royal officials ignored her concerns about her mental health and that she faced racist attitudes.

Concerts nixed, activists sentenced in Hong Kong crackdown

HONG KONG (AP)—A popular Hong Kong singer and pro-democracy activist will not be allowed to perform at one of the city's top theaters later this month, in an indication that a crackdown by authorities on dissent is reaching the entertainment and cultural sphere. The Hong Kong Arts Centre cited a public safety clause in canceling Denise Ho's venue reservations for her concerts, according to a statement posted Wednesday on Facebook by the singer's company, Goomusic. Separately, a court sentenced seven pro-democracy activists to between 11 and 16 months in jail for an unauthorized assembly during anti-government protests in 2019. The cancellation of Ho's concerts came days after pro-Beijing newspaper Ta Kung Pao accused her of being "anti-China" due to her involvement in the 2019 pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong. Ho is an outspoken activist who joined in widespread protests in 2014 and again in 2019 that sought to protect Hong Kong's longstanding civil liberties from mainland Chinese interference.

Wife unsettled at MIL's frequent presence at home

DEAR ABBY: I have been married for nearly 10 years. I guess I never noticed this while we were dating, but as our marriage has progressed, it's becoming increasingly apparent he's a complete "mama's boy." He calls her constantly with updates (some I'd prefer she didn't know about) and invites her over frequently without consulting me.

I have tried to gently express that sometimes it's a bit much (especially because he tells her things before he tells me), but he becomes defensive and accuses me of not liking her. It doesn't help that his father died five years ago, leaving her a rather young widow. I feel his protectiveness over her has accelerated because he fears she will be alone too much.

My mother-in-law is a nice person, but I need my space. After work, I want to come home and spend time with my husband and children without another person always being there. It has reached the point that I'm starting to resent her, and that's not fair to her. Please help.

CROWDED IN WISCONSIN

DEAR CROWDED: You're right, it isn't fair that you are aiming your resentment at your mother-in-law. The person who should be the target of your displeasure is your husband. I assume you have already tried communicating to him the legitimate complaints you listed in your letter. It may require help from a marriage counselor to get him to understand that you don't dislike his mother, but that certain things between a husband and wife should remain private. Yes, she is his mother, but common courtesy would dictate that the two of you agree about how often you will come home after a hard day's work to find her sitting there.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I've been married for more than 30 years. Our marriage isn't wonderful, but it's better than most. I love my husband, but I'm not sure I am "in love" with him. I have had an off-and-on friendship with my ex-boyfriend for the past 40 years. We're not intimate—just friends. We meet occasionally for coffee or dinner to talk. He is divorced.

Logically, I know he isn't the right one, but my heart still feels strongly for him. This in spite of a 20-year gap when we didn't see or hear from each other. I ran into him three years ago and we started talking, but a year went by before we saw each other again. No matter how hard I try, I can't seem to get him out of my heart. He says he will always love me, but I don't think he means "in love."

He has been with someone for five years whom he cares for and is thinking of marrying because he is getting older and wants the companionship. He claims not to be in love with her. I hurt when I don't hear from him regularly. My heart aches when I think about not having him in my life at all. How do I get over him?

EMOTIONALLY INVESTED

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR INVESTED: Wake up and accept that if your ex-boyfriend were in love with you, he would have demonstrated it by now. He appears to be very comfortable with the companion he's involved with—regardless of the fact he says he isn't in love with her, either. A surefire way to get over this lingering crush would be to start counting the many blessings you have with your husband of 30 years, and if there is something "missing," begin a dialogue and work to improve it.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

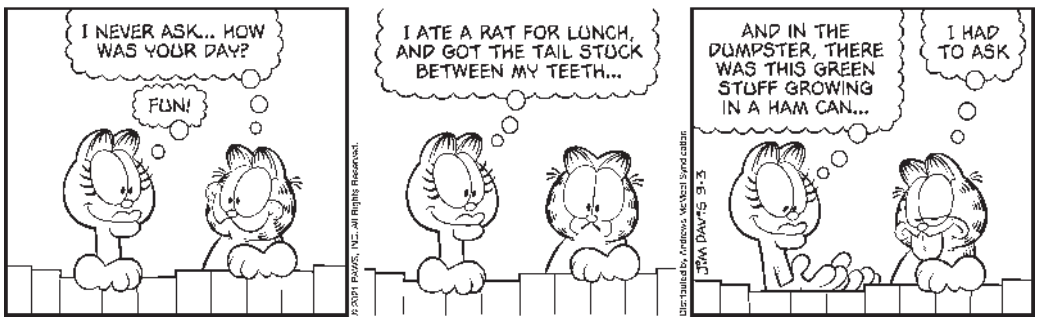
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HURRY UP, CALVIN. OUR RESERVATION IS FOR 7:00.
CAN HOBBES COME TO THE RESTAURANT?
NO.
WHY NOT?
WE'RE AFRAID HE MIGHT EAT SOMEONE. LET'S GO.
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU PROBABLY WOULD, WOULDN'T YOU?
I CAN NEVER STAY ON A DIET IN A RESTAURANT.

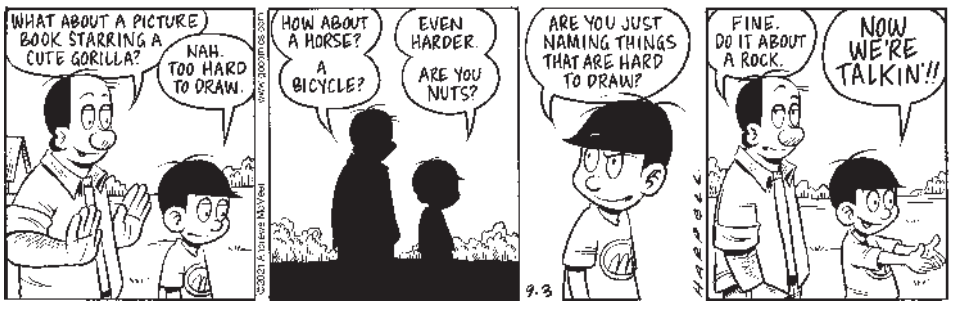
Garfield®

By Jim Davis


I NEVER ASK.. HOW WAS YOUR DAY?
FUN!
I ATE A RAT FOR LUNCH, AND GOT THE TAIL STUCK BETWEEN MY TEETH...
AND IN THE DUMPSTER, THERE WAS THIS GREEN STUFF GROWING IN A HAM CAN...
I HAD TO ASK

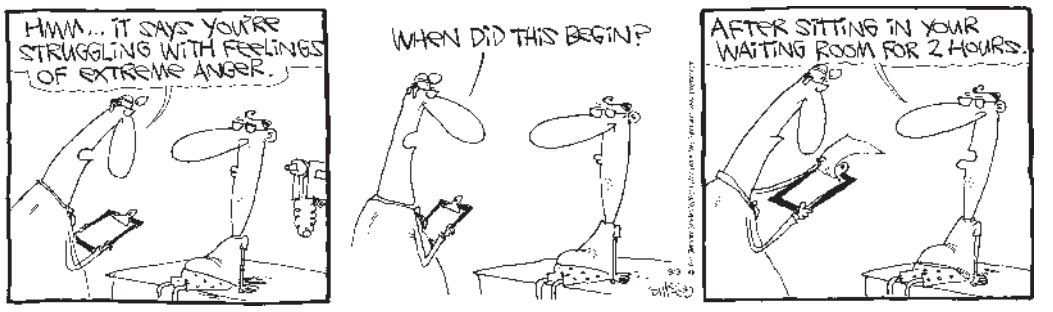
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WHAT ABOUT A PICTURE BOOK STARRING A CUTE GORILLA?
NAH. TOO HARD TO DRAW.
HOW ABOUT A HORSE? A BICYCLE?
EVEN HARDER. ARE YOU NUTS?
ARE YOU JUST NAMING THINGS THAT ARE HARD TO DRAW?
FINE. DO IT ABOUT A ROCK.
NOW WE'RE TALKIN'!!

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


HMM... IT SAYS YOU'RE STRUGGLING WITH FEELINGS OF EXTREME ANGER.
WHEN DID THIS BEGIN?
AFTER SITTING IN YOUR WAITING ROOM FOR 2 HOURS.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

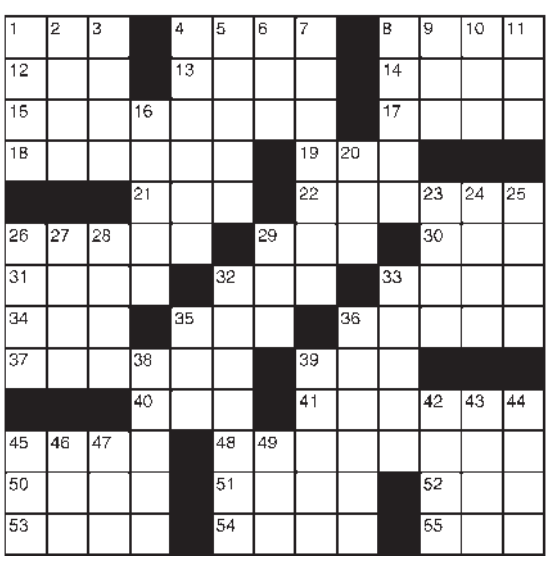
ACROSS
1 Rm. coolers
4 Gator's kin
8 Academic
12 Jazzy style
13 It grows on you
14 Charged bits
15 Deep fissure
17 Karate blow
18 Trig measure
19 Scratch
21 School support org.
22 Woodwind player
26 You're looking at them
29 French article
30 Sigma follower
31 Beatty and Rorem
32 Tax pro
33 Biting remark
34 Life story
35 "— Doubtfire"
36 Salsa singer Cruz
37 Pooch
39 Monopoly buys (Abbr.)
40 Trim the grass
41 Model Lauren
45 Test the waters
48 Lover of Troilus
50 Draft status
51 "Do — others ..."
52 Silent assent
53 Sharp
54 London gallery
55 Geological period

DOWN
1 Grade school basics
2 Apple center
3 Detail, briefly
4 Monk's music
5 Bob Marley, for one
6 Sue Grafton's "— for Outlaw"
7 Where fine Italian violins are made
8 Itty-bitty
9 Sound of delight
10 Sean — Lennon
11 Recipe abbr.
16 Smokes an e-cig
20 Honest politician
23 Slanted type (Abbr.)
24 Ganges wrap
25 Hefty horn
26 "Mad Money" network
27 "Star Wars" princess
28 Japanese noodle
29 Boom times
32 Short do
33 Defeats
35 6 on a phone
36 Fictional castaway
38 "That is to say ..."
39 Fictional Butler
42 Fork prong
43 Air freshener target
44 Zilch
45 Stir-fry pan
46 Hydro-carbon ending
47 Actor Billy — Williams
49 Genetic letters

Solution time: 25 mins.

N	O	R	M		G	I	V	E		L	O	G
A	L	A	I		L	A	I	T		A	T	A
P	A	R	K	B	E	N	C	H		R	O	I
A	Y	E	A	Y	E			O	A	K	E	N
			D	E		J	E	S	U	S		
S	L	M	O		S	O		G	P	A	S	
C	V	A			I	L	K		U	M	A	
T	A	R	T		L	I	S		P	R	O	M
		K	I	C	K	S		D	R			
P	A	D	M	A			E	E	Y	O	R	E
U	N	O		D	A	R	K	A	N	G	E	L
M	O	W		R	I	N	G		N	E	A	L
A	N	N		E	R	A	S		E	E	L	S

Yesterday's answer 9-3



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Rita Volk, 31; Shaun White, 35; Omi, 35; Garrett Hedlund, 37.

Happy Birthday: Volunteer work will lift your spirits and connect you to someone who has something to offer. Direct the changes you make into something that adds knowledge and skills to your qualifications. The more you do to diversify, the easier it will be to fulfill your dreams. Kindness and consideration will help a partnership going through changes due to emotional or health problems. Your numbers are 7, 15, 21, 28, 34, 42, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Keep your thoughts to yourself. Make changes at home that will add to your comfort. A creative pursuit will keep you occupied and encourage you to pursue something you enjoy that has the potential to bring in extra cash as well. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Maintain secrecy regarding your intentions. Keep everyone guessing in order to avoid interference. Putter around the house and make your place convenient for what you want to pursue. Physical activity will ease stress and anxiety and give you greater insight into what's possible. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Be careful when handling friends, relatives and your lover. Emotional matters will escalate if someone evades the truth or overreacts. Refuse to let a change that takes place prompt you to act irrationally. Bide your time. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* You can live by the rules and still give a unique twist to whatever you do. Use your ingenuity, savvy and experience to conquer whatever or whoever you encounter along the way. A financial gain is within reach. Send out your resume. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Look for creative ways to make your money grow. Adjust your spending habits, and rethink any joint expenses you share. Use your charm to get out of something you feel is holding you back. Embrace new opportunities with optimism. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Take the initiative and do something physical and exhilarating. The more active you are, the less time you will have to complain or get into an emotional disagreement. Give others the same freedom that you want in return. Keep the peace. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Refuse to let your emotions take over. An intelligent decision will stabilize your personal or professional position and lead to a chance to have some fun with someone who appreciates what you have to offer. Choose harmony over discord. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You'll overcome an unsavory situation if you remain disciplined. Don't let temptation set in when dealing with someone asking for too much. You can't buy loyalty, but you can structure a plan that benefits you and those you want to impress. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Pick up the pace, and don't stop until you are satisfied with the results. A lot depends on how you deal with others and handle your responsibilities. The right move will improve your chance to advance. Personal gain is heading your way. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Get approval before you make a change that will affect others or disrupt your home or workplace. Keeping others in the know will ensure that you aren't blindsided by something you overlooked. Being receptive will help bring you closer to someone helpful. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* You're in the driver's seat and can make a difference that will encourage personal financial gain, better opportunities and a chance to spend more time with someone you love. Shoot for the stars. You can make your dreams come true. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Limit what you spend, donate or promote. Set standards and stick to them even if someone tries to talk you into something enticing. Be true to yourself, the ones you love and to the beliefs you hold dear. Trust in you. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are energetic, creative and social. You are affectionate and possessive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		4		1		6		
		1				8		
3	5						1	9
			6	3	8			
7								6
			4	7	5			
2	6						8	5
		5				2		
		9		4		1		

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 9/03

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

6	2	8	1	3	4	9	5	7
5	7	3	8	6	9	1	4	2
9	1	4	7	5	2	6	8	3
2	5	1	3	9	8	7	6	4
8	9	7	6	4	1	2	3	5
4	3	6	2	7	5	8	9	1
7	6	5	9	1	3	4	2	8
1	4	2	5	8	6	3	7	9
3	8	9	4	2	7	5	1	6

Difficulty level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

THE MALDIVES **Solution: 7 letters**

K	U	U	R	A	S	S	A	L	E	V	D	I	V	E
H	U	M	T	R	O	P	I	C	A	L	V	B	R	S
U	A	R	E	R	S	A	R	B	H	E	C	A	E	P
H	V	L	A	E	S	O	L	I	H	A	M	N	T	O
L	A	B	U	M	H	E	L	D	V	I	G	D	A	R
O	A	L	I	M	A	T	H	A	R	A	A	O	W	T
N	D	N	A	S	H	T	U	I	R	G	T	S	S	S
I	H	T	D	U	S	A	H	L	U	K	U	E	F	S
F	O	H	O	R	B	I	V	I	C	N	A	E	C	O
M	O	S	O	U	T	H	G	U	U	D	E	E	S	Y
O	Ⓐ	O	C	K	R	A	C	R	F	R	N	G	E	T
S	T	Ⓢ	D	U	K	O	A	E	G	I	I	D	S	U
Q	O	H	Ⓘ	H	R	F	E	E	C	N	D	I	U	A
U	L	A	M	Ⓐ	Y	I	N	M	S	K	I	R	O	E
E	L	I	L	I	G	N	I	L	L	I	V	K	H	B

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Alimatha, Asdhoo, Asia, Atoll, Bandos, Baros, Beauty, Chagos, Coral, Dhevi, Dine, Dive, Drink, Faru, Finolhu, Food, Fuvahmulah, Guest, Houses, Hukuru, Kagi, King, Kuramathi, Meeru, Mirihi, Mosque, Niyama, Ocean, Peace, Private, Reefs, Ridge, Sail, Sand, Scenic, Scuba, Solar, Solih, South, Sports, Tour, Tropical, Ukulhas, Utheemu, Vaadhoo, Velassaru, Villingili, Water

Yesterday's Answer: Investigate

Jo's Jewels Collector's Edition is back by popular demand! Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

Brewers knock Giants from top spot in NL, win fourth in row

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Jace Peterson hit a go-ahead single in the seventh, Lorenzo Cain homered for a second straight game and the Milwaukee Brewers knocked the San Francisco Giants out of the top spot in the National League for the first time in more than three months with a 5-2 win Wednesday night.

The Giants (84-49) matched their longest losing streak of the season at four and fell to second in the NL West after a San Francisco-era best 108 days on top since May 30. The defending World Series champion Dodgers (85-49) moved ahead in the NL and West division by holding off the Braves at home 4-3.

Daniel Norris (2-3) struck out two in the sixth for the win after starter Brett Anderson exited early after being hit in the pitching shoulder by a 103 mph line drive. Josh Hader closed out the Brewers' fourth straight victory for his 29th save.

Dominic Leone (3-3) got into trouble with two outs in the seventh before Jose Alvarez relieved and gave up Peterson's hit.

LaMonte Wade Jr. doubled with one out in the eighth against Jake Cousins but San Francisco couldn't capitalize.

Kris Bryant hit an RBI double in the fifth for San Francisco. Justin Topa then intentionally walked Brandon Belt, and Buster Posey followed with a tying single.

Kevin Gausman struck out seven over five innings, allowing Cain's two-run single as one of four hits. The right-hander has three straight no-decisions but has won his last three decisions since a loss to Houston on July 30.

An injury forced Anderson out early for a second straight outing after he left his last start because of right hip tightness.

The left-hander took a scary line drive on his pitching shoulder off Brandon Crawford's bat in the second. Anderson was able to avoid taking it in the head. He was checked on then made a few tosses and stayed in the game to finish the inning before exiting.

Anderson, whose career began across San Francisco Bay with the Oakland Athletics from 2009-2013 then later returned, had lost three straight starts and is winless since Aug. 1 at Atlanta.

San Francisco Giants catcher Buster Posey, right, prepares to tag out Milwaukee Brewers' Luis Urias at home during the second inning of a baseball game in San Francisco, Wednesday, Sept. 1, 2021. AP

Yankees 4, Angels 1

In Anaheim, Calif., Gerrit Cole racked up a season-high 15 strikeouts over seven innings to earn his AL-leading 14th victory, and the New York Yankees snapped a four-game losing streak with a 4-1 victory over the Los Angeles Angels on Wednesday night.

Aaron Judge hit his 30th homer and Luke Voit had a two-run single for the Yankees, who had won 13 straight before their skid.

Cole (14-6) yielded four hits and didn't walk a batter while posting his biggest strikeout total since joining the Yankees. Aroldis Chapman pitched the ninth for his 25th save.

David Fletcher delivered an RBI double in the sixth for the Angels, whose three-game winning streak ended.

Packy Naughton (0-1) yielded six hits and three runs while pitching into the fourth inning of his first major league start.

Dodgers 4, Braves 3

In Los Angeles, Justin Turner and AJ Pollock singled home the tying and go-ahead runs through the same infield hole in the eighth inning, and Los Angeles completed a three-game sweep of Atlanta.

The Dodgers staked Max Scherzer to an early 2-0 lead and he was dominating the NL East-leading Braves when he left after 76 pitches. The right-hander struck out nine and walked none in six innings.

Austin Barnes homered for the Dodgers. Dansby Swanson hit a tiebreaking solo home run, his 26th, for Atlanta.

Phil Bickford (3-1) got one out for the win. Joe Kelly pitched the ninth to earn his fifth career save.

Chris Martin (2-4) took the loss as Atlanta dropped its third straight.

Mariners 1, Astros 0

In Seattle, Seattle rookie right-hander Logan Gilbert and four relievers combined to shut out Houston for the second straight day and J.P. Crawford scored the lone run on a sacrifice fly.

Seattle took two of three in the series from the AL West leaders. The Mariners managed just three hits off Houston starter Jake Odorizzi (6-7) and four relievers.

Justus Sheffield (6-8) got the win in his first relief appearance in more than two years, and Paul Sewald got the last four outs for his eighth save.

Red Sox 3, Rays 2

In St. Petersburgh, Fla., Jarren Duran had a tiebreaking RBI single in the ninth and COVID-19-impacted Boston stopped AL East-leading Tampa Bay's nine-game winning streak.

Boston infielder Yairo Muñoz became the latest Boston player to test positive for the coronavirus. Eight Boston players and two coaches have either had a positive test or are considered close contacts since last Friday.

Rafael Devers opened the ninth with a single off Pete Fairbanks (3-5) and went to second on Alex Verdugos one-out infield hit. After Christian Vázquez struck out, Duran made it 3-2 on his base-hit to right.

Garrett Whitlock (7-2) went two scoreless innings before Adam Ottavino worked the ninth to get his 11th save.

Rays rookie Wander Franco homered off Chris Sale.

Blue Jays 5, Orioles 4

In Toronto, Randal Grichuk hit a tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the eighth inning and Toronto beat Baltimore.

Marcus Semien hit a solo home run and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. had two hits and two RBIs to help the Blue Jays take two of three from the Orioles.

Tim Mayza (5-2) worked one inning and Jordan Romano finished for his 15th save in 16 chances.

Dillon Tate (0-5) took the loss.

Tigers 8, Athletics 6

In Detroit, Miguel Cabrera hit a two-run homer, No. 502 of his career, and drove in the go-ahead run with a single in the seventh inning as Detroit snapped a four-game skid with a win over Oakland.

Akil Baddoo and Harold Castro homered and drove in two runs apiece for Detroit, which had lost 12 straight at home to Oakland.

Joe Jimenez (5-1) tossed an inning of scoreless relief for the win, and Gregory Soto earned his 17th save.

Matt Olson drove in three runs for the A's, who had won three straight. Jed Lowrie had a pair of RBI doubles and Starling Marte hit a solo homer.

A.J. Puk (0-2) took the loss.

Cardinals 5, Reds 4, 1st game
Reds 12, Cardinals 2, 2nd game

In Cincinnati, Nick Castellanos drove in six runs with a grand slam and a two-run shot in the first two innings, and Cincinnati earned a double-header split with St. Louis.

Cincinnati rocked starter J.A. Happ (8-7) and regained a half-game lead over San Diego for second in the NL wild-card race. St. Louis slipped into a tie for fourth with Philadelphia.

Paul Goldschmidt gave St. Louis the lead with his second homer of the game as the Cardinals won the opener. The Cardinals trailed 4-3 before Goldschmidt drove his third homer of the series into the last section of seats in deep right-center field with Tommy Edman on first base in the fourth.

Castellanos' grand-slam was the fourth of five straight Cincinnati hits to start the second against Happ, knocking him out of the game. The Reds piled up eight hits and seven runs with two walks and no strikeouts against the left-hander.

Reds right-hander Sonny Gray (7-6) allowed Tommy Edman's leadoff home run. Nolan Arenado added a solo shot.

The Cardinals in the opener bashed three homers among their 12 hits off Wade Miley (11-5), both season highs against the left-hander. Miley gave up five runs with one walk and two strikeouts in four innings for his first loss in 16 starts since coming off the injured list on May 30.

Reliever Génesis Cabrera (3-5) pitched two scoreless innings for St. Louis. Giovanny Gallegos pitched the seventh for his fourth save.

Cubs 3, Twins 0

In Minneapolis, Frank Schwindel hit a three-run homer and a pair of pitchers combined on a two-hitter in Chicago's win over Minnesota.

Justin Steele (3-2) won for the first time since joining the Cubs' rotation on Aug. 10. The rookie left-hander gave up one hit, walked three and struck out three over five innings. Adbert Alzolay earned his first career save. He allowed one hit and struck out five.

Schwindel's drive in the third was all the Cubs mustered against U.S. Olympic pitcher Joe Ryan (0-1), making his major league debut for the Twins.

Rockies 9, Rangers 5

In Arlington, Texas, Brendan Rodgers' two-run double put Colorado ahead during a five-run ninth inning, and the Rockies rallied from an early 5-0 deficit to beat Texas.

Rodgers, who homered in the fourth inning, doubled to the gap in left-center off Joe Barlow (0-2), the sixth of seven Texas relievers. The Rockies scored three more runs aided by four Rangers infield errors, three by first baseman Nathaniel Lowe. The four errors tied a team record for one inning, and Lowe's broke a club record for a player in one inning.

Jhoulys Chacin (3-1), the fifth of six Colorado relievers, pitched two scoreless innings as the Rockies salvaged the finale of a three-game series.

Diamondbacks 8, Padres 3

In Phoenix, Josh VanMeter homered in a six-run third inning as Arizona knocked out Yu Darvish early and beat San Diego.

Luke Weaver (3-3), making his first start in 3 1/2 months, took a shutout into the sixth inning. Pavin Smith and Ketel Marte had three hits apiece.

Arizona snapped a five-game skid and prevented a series sweep.

Darvish (7-9) gave up eight hits and six runs, five earned, in 2 2/3 innings.

White Sox 6, Pirates 3

In Chicago, rookie Gavin Sheets hit two home runs, leading Chicago over Pittsburgh.

Sheets, promoted from Triple-A Charlotte before the game, hit a three-run homer off Max Kranick (1-3) with two out in the fourth inning to snap a scoreless tie. Sheets hit a solo homer in the bottom of the eighth for his eighth homer of the season.

White Sox starter Carlos Rodon (10-5) pitched five innings of five-hit ball. Liam Hendriks earned his 31st save.

The Pirates set a modern major league record by playing their 175 consecutive game without being charged with a passed ball, surpassing the previous mark set by the Montreal Expos from June 10, 1978, to June 26, 1979, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Indians 5, Royals 3, 11 innings

In Kansas City, Mo., Austin Hedges popped an RBI single just out of reach of first baseman Carlos Santana for the tiebreaking run in the 11th inning and Cleveland beat Kansas City.

Hedges' bloop off Ervin Santana (1-2) fell in shallow right field, allowing pinch-runner Daniel Johnson to score from second. Yu Chang followed with a run-scoring double.

Taylor Stephen pitched a perfect bottom of the 11th for his first save. Blake Parker (2-0) got the win.

Chang clubbed his first career pinch-hit home run in the seventh inning off reliever Jake Brentz.

Stephens overpowers Gauff at US Open; Osaka's foe withdraws

NEW YORK (AP)—Three years ago, a reporter asked Sloane Stephens to point out a younger tennis player most fans might not have heard of yet, someone she thought could become a household name some day. Stephens paused to ponder, but not for long, before responding: Coco Gauff, then 14.

Stephens had first met Gauff several years earlier—they last hit together on a court in Florida when Gauff was 12—and clearly knew what she was talking about. The world would quickly discover Gauff, too. The pair of friends met in an official match for the first time Wednesday night at the U.S. Open, and it was Stephens, the 2017 champion now ranked 66th, who pulled away for a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Gauff, now 17 and seeded 21st.

Afterward, the pair met at the net for a warm hug, before Stephens praised the player—and person—Gauff has become.

"I love Coco. I think everyone knows I love Coco. At the end of the match, I said, 'I love you.' She's such a great player and I feel so lucky to have seen her grow up and play since she was 8," Stephens told the Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd.

"I know," Stephens added, "there's going to be great things ahead for her."

With the Ashe roof shut during a heavy downpour brought by remnants of Hurrican Ida—a tornado warning was in effect in the region and there was flooding around the grounds of the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center—the thump-thump-thump of the rain created a bass beat that drowned out the usual sounds of a tennis match. It was so loud Stephens could barely hear the questions during her on-court interview.

Only one other court at Flushing Meadows can be covered during bad weather, but even that was an issue Wednesday evening, because wind helped push rain through the space between the concourse and the retractable cover at Louis Armstrong Stadium—a gap there on purpose to provide natural ventilation. So the match between two-time major finalist Kevin Anderson and Diego Schwartzman was delayed for nearly a half-hour at 5-all in the first set while workers used air blowers to dry the playing surface, then stopped again early in the second set when the court got so wet that efforts to clear the puddles were abandoned.

Eventually, the tournament gave up on getting that match done in Armstrong and decided to move it to Ashe, where Schwartzman wrapped up a 7-6 (4), 6-3, 6-4 win just past 1 a.m., following the conclusion of French Open runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas' 6-3, 6-4, 6-7 (4), 6-0 victory over Adrian Mannarino. Those moving on in the men's draw in the afternoon included No. 2 Daniil Medvedev, No. 5 Andrey Rublev and 18-year-old Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz, who takes on Tsitsipas next.

Sloane Stephens, of the United States, right, hugs Coco Gauff, of the United States, after Stephens won their match during the second round of the US Open tennis championships, Wednesday, Sept. 1, 2021, in New York. AP

The match to determine the next foe for Stephens—three-time Slam champ Angelique Kerber vs. Anhelina Kalinina—was supposed to be played in Armstrong following Anderson-Schwartzman but was postponed until Thursday.

The conditions didn't matter at all to defending champion Naomi Osaka, who advanced in the morning when her second-round opponent, Olga Danilovic, pulled out of the tournament because of what she said was a viral illness—but not COVID-19.

Other past major title winners Simona Halep, Garbiñe Muguruza and Victoria Azarenka moved on more conventionally with straight-set wins. Muguruza next faces Azarenka, who in addition to a pair of Australian Open trophies is a three-time runner-up at the U.S. Open, including when she lost to Osaka in the final a year ago.

Osaka hasn't been beaten in a Grand Slam match since losing to Gauff at the 2020 Australian Open.

And against Stephens, Gauff did briefly display the varied skills that helped her to that win and others on big stages, including twice against Venus Williams, and a run to the Roland Garros quarterfinals in June.

But Stephens, quite simply, was better. From 4-all at the outset, she claimed eight of the remaining 10 games, with a performance largely built with terrific placement of her serves and stinging forehands. Gauff's lone break chance came when she was up 2-1 in the second set, but Stephens held there, then broke at love and was on her way, never ceding another game.

"The forehand," Stephens said, "was key today."

Gauff had seen that forehand up close five years ago during a friendly practice but, as she noted: "I definitely don't remember how her ball felt when I was 12. She definitely was probably taking some pace off then. I don't really count that."

Stephens, who was two points from losing to good friend Madison Keys on Monday in a rematch of their 2017 final in New York, won 39 of 49 points she served, an 80% rate. She also put 84% of her first serves in play.

"I love that," Stephens said when a reporter told her about that number.

More than a decade Gauff's senior at age 28, Stephens also handled her opponent's faster serves adroitly, breaking three times.

Both walloped the ball during big-strike exchanges from the baseline, with enviable and unrelenting power. The official stats showed they combined for 24 winners and 44 unforced errors, but that latter designation seemed unfair to assign, given how much each was forced to try to handle from the other side of the net.

"Obviously, I have a lot of respect for Sloane. Looked up to her for a while. Known her since I was little," Gauff said. "But I don't think our relationship affected the match."

Azarenka: Time for players to talk about mandatory vaccines

NEW YORK (AP)—After reaching the U.S. Open final last year with no fans, Victoria Azarenka appreciates playing in front of people again.

Especially because of what they had to do to be in the stands.

Spectators must show proof of at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to attend matches. Players are not required to get a shot and only about half on the men's and women's tours have.

"I want to start this conversation between our players, because to me that's a bit bizarre that fans have to be vaccinated and players are not," Azarenka said. "So I think that in my opinion, it's inevitable that it will be mandated at some point, like other leagues are doing.

"I don't see the point of stalling it really, because I think we all want to be safe, we all want to continue doing our jobs, and I know there is a lot of discussions about it."

After her 6-3, 7-6 (1) victory over Jasmine Paolini, the three-time U.S. Open runner-up said during her interview on the court that it was "cool" there were so many vaccinated people there to watch her.

Novak Djokovic said before the tournament he hopes the decision to get a vaccination remains a personal one. Azarenka thinks it's time for the players and tours to talk about taking it beyond that.

"I hope that as an association we make the best decision for our business, for our health, for the tournaments, for public," she said. "And I think that we need to start this conversation, because as I said, in my opinion it's just inevitable."

SABALENKA'S SCARE

As Aryna Sabalenka approached the net after beating Tamara Zidansek, she made clear that she wanted to shake with her left hand.

That's because the No. 2 seed was trying to protect her right one.

Sabalenka said she hurt it when she fell on her right arm during her match and her finger was swollen afterward.

"We'll see tomorrow what's going on with my fingers, because right now it's a little bit bigger," she said. "It's the color of my finger is changing. It's getting darker."

Sabalenka had no trouble playing through the pain, winning 6-3, 6-1 in 59 minutes. She had 24 winners to just 10 unforced errors.

Now she hopes there will be no effects from an injury that was so painful that she initially feared a broken hand.

"I was really worrying about my arm and my hand, and I'm really happy that I could finish this match," Sabalenka said. "I have an extra day to see what's going on, and maybe to do the best recovery I can do. Yeah, we'll see. But I'm really, really hoping that I will be able to play on Friday."

HOME COUNTRY'S HOPES

After 13 American men made it to the second round of the U.S. Open for the first time since 1994, Frances Tiafoe made sure at least two of them will get to the third round.

Tiafoe, a 23-year-old from Maryland now based in Florida, moved on Wednesday by beating Argentina's Guido Pella 6-1, 6-2, 7-5.

Tiafoe reached the fourth round at last year's U.S. Open. He can return to that stage if he defeats No. 5 seed Andrey Rublev next.

"That's what I want. I want him bad. ... I'm coming after him," Tiafoe said.

The last time they played each other was as juniors: Tiafoe beat Rublev in the U.S. Open boys' quarterfinals in 2014.

The other two U.S. men in action Wednesday lost: Marcos Giron and Brandon Nakashima.

There are 10 others scheduled to play on Thursday, including a couple of Californians who meet, guaranteeing that one will get to the third round: Taylor Fritz and Jenson Brooksby.

The 13 to notch at least one win at Flushing Meadows were the most from the host country since 15 did it 27 years ago, a group that included Grand Slam title winners Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi, Ivan Lendl, Jim Courier and Michael Chang.

QUALITY QUALIFIERS

Four male qualifiers have made it to the U.S. Open's third round for the second time since 2000: Germany's Peter Gojowczyk, Switzerland's Henri Laaksonen, Dutchman Botic van de Zandschulp and Slovakia's Alex Molcan all won Wednesday.

Two more can join them by winning Thursday: American Maxime Cressy and Germany's Oscar Otte.

Gojowczyk credited three victories in the pre-tournament rounds of qualifying with helping him build momentum for the main draw.

"Physically and mentally, I'm pretty strong right now," he said after beating Dusan Lajovic 2-6, 6-4, 2-6, 7-5, 6-4 on Wednesday, following up his elimination of No. 23 seed Ugo Humbert in another five-setter in the first round Monday.

In qualifying, Gojowczyk beat Lukas Rosol, Robin Haase and Francisco Cerúndolo.

"It helps a lot if you have some confidence and if you're winning some close matches," Gojowczyk said. "It helps you a lot on the big stage."

On Wednesday, van de Zandschulp surprised No. 8 seed Casper Ruud 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-4, Laaksonen got past No. 16 seed Cristian Garín 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2, 6-4, and Molcan edged Brandon Nakashima 6-3, 3-6, 1-6, 6-2, 6-4.

PRIDE DAY

If a men's professional tennis player came out as gay, Daniil Medvedev thinks he would be supported.

"I honestly think from my side—of course, you never know what's true—but from my side, I think everybody would be super open if somebody would come out on the ATP Tour," the 2019 U.S. Open runner-up said.

The No. 2 seed won his second-round match on the day the U.S. Open celebrated Pride Day.

"I think it's great from (the) U.S. Open, this initiative," Medvedev said. "I think ATP honestly is doing a good job also, especially internally, trying to provide info and to just make sure that if anybody wants to come out, he's going to feel safe and secure."

CFoGA adopts changes to tryouts

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Commonwealth Federation of Golf Associations has adopted rule changes starting this Sunday for the second of five tryouts for the CNMI National Golf Team for the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games.

According to CFoGA social and media officer Geri Dela Cruz, except for the final tryout on Oct. 16 golf carts can now be used for the remaining tryouts.

"The federation determined that there was more than ample time for a selected athlete to condition for a walking competition. Therefore, carts can be utilized during tryouts," she said.

As such the Oct. 16 tryout will be mandatory and will be a "walking" game for golfers hoping to make the CNMI National Golf Team.

Dela Cruz also clarified that caddies may use a golf cart on Oct. 16 with conditions, among them are carts should stay in the cart path at all times and golfers may not sit or lean on the golf carts. Golfers not vying for slots in the national team, however, can use golf carts during the Oct. 16 game.

CFoGA also announced that the selection of the CNMI National Golf will now be based on the two lowest scores plus the score in the final tryout on Oct. 16.

Tee boxes have also been adjusted in holes No. 2, 8, 15, and 18. "It was a recommendation from the Pacific Games tournament director to adjust tee boxes as the proposed golf course total yardage is too long," said Dela Cruz.

J.J. Atalig, seen here in a file photo, topped the first tryout for the CNMI National Golf Team for the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games held last Aug. 21 the Coral Ocean Resort.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

This was seconded by CFoGA president Edward Manibusan.

"The blue tees may be too long. We are working on getting the correct overall yardage for the competition. We are estimating not less than 6,500 yards. We played the entire course in the first round at around 7,100 yards," he said.

Showtime for this Sunday's tryout is 7am and tee time is at 8am. Tryout fee is $30 and green is also $30.

CFoGA is looking at forming a national team made up of two men's players, two junior men's players, two women's players, and two junior women's players. Pacific Games Council eligibility rules dictate that only U.S. citizens who are CNMI residents can try out for the national team. Another eligibility requirement CFoGA included is anyone trying out should also be a member of any CFoGA-sanctioned club.

Aside from Dela Cruz and Manibusan, CFoGA's officers include vice president J.J. Atalig, secretary/treasurer Lorraine Babauta, and golf tournament coordinators Marco Peter and Joey Dela Cruz. Peter incidentally is also the chairman of the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee.

For more information on the CFoGA tryouts for the Mini Games, call Dela Cruz at 783-4287 and Atalig at 285-1612.

SAIPAN

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the Oceania Championships," he said in an interview with *Saipan Tribune*.

Babauta said two events will translate to more competitors and since it's the 2022 Oceania Senior Weightlifting Championships, the CNMI should expect top-of-the-line weightlifters from the region, with some of the athletes fresh from this year's stint in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

"So we're doing two events at the same time. Oceania will definitely be sending a big contingent. We will have a little more than 200 participants in the weightlifting competition. It will be held simultaneously. The key there is we're going to have more world-class athletes in town for this reason," he said.

CNMI National Weightlifting coach David Barnhouse is also excited about the development and looks forward to playing host and competing in both the 2022 Oceania Senior Weightlifting Championships and the 2022 Mini Games.

"This is the biggest event we ever have and ever will host. Continental championships are just one step below the world championships and are gold-level events for Olympic qualification. What that means is any athlete in the region that is planning to go to the Olympics will be here," he said.

Babauta earlier said that nearly 1,900 athletes and officials from 21 island nations have so far confirmed their participation in next year's Mini Games the CNMI is hosting for the very first time.

With 218 athletes expected, weightlifting is the second most in terms of the number of delegates after va'a or outrigger canoe. The sport will be held at the Saipan World Resort.

4 NAMED

From Page 24

School, Saipan International School, and Saipan Southern High School.

Currently, Galvez is training for the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games 2022, as he hopes to have the honor to represent the CNMI again at the regional competition. He was a member of the CNMI National Team that competed in the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa and was among the first players to form a youth squad under NMBA's club system.

Sapong was named June NMSA Female Athlete of the Month after she ran a season-best 13.42 seconds in the women's 100m event of the Northern Marianas Athletics' Track and Field Open Meet last June 19.

It was her first competition in more than a year since most regional events in athletics have been postponed or cancelled due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Although she trains six times a week, she still finds time to mentor NMA's 18-and-under developmental squad, helping them improve their skills. She enjoys spending her time coaching and guiding youth athletes. If she is not on the track competing, Sapong also volunteers her time officiating.

Dela Cruz won the June NMSA Male Student of the Month after surprising everyone by winning the men's 100m sprint with a time of 12.65 seconds in the same NMA open meet.

The 15-year-old entered the 18-and-under division, but ended up being the fastest overall. He also achieved the feat amazingly while running barefoot. The Cha Cha Middle School student is also currently part of NMA's 18-and-under developmental squad.

Bucalig, June's NMSA Female Student of the Month, is the team captain for the Lady Rollers. She demonstrated outstanding leadership in the Summer Heat 3v3 Basketball Tournament held at the Tinian Gymnasium and the Marianas International Basketball League 3v3 Season 2 Tournament held at the Marianas High School Gymnasium in June.

Bucalig takes the initiative to help her fellow teammates, guiding them on both offense and defense. She has great instincts and is always one step ahead of her teammates and the opposition. She led the team to win the 3v3 tournament on Tinian. Bucalig is a senior at Mount Carmel High School and aside from basketball, she also plays soccer and volleyball. Bucalig is a both a superb athlete and an outstanding leader.

Shirley's Badminton Club was also named NMSA Team of the Month for June after topping the TanHoldings Badminton Team Tournament, Northern Marianas Badminton Association's first competition in 2021.

The club's players were selected via random draw and for nearly half of the 15 total players (eight men and seven women) of SBC, this was their first-ever badminton tournament. Despite the lack of playing experience, SBC pulled off an upset in the competition as it collected 50 points in the round-robin tournament to beat the Golden Racquets (37), Taga Badminton Club (35), United Badminton Club (29), and Community Badminton Club (28).

The June awardees are eligible to be named athletes/team of the year and will be recognized at the annual NMSA Awards Banquet.

PUES

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Pangelinan induced the next three batters—A.J. Evangelista, Gio Mira, and Maratita—to either ground out or flyout to end the inning.

Ko Lizama was responsible for Pues OK 4Nate's lone score in the fourth inning after he was drove in by Ben Flores. Angels had one gasp left in them in the fifth when Vince Torres and Willow Quitugua hit back-to-back jacks to trim Pues OK 4Nate's lead to 8-3.

Pues OK 4Nate, however, quieted the Angels dugout and quashed any thoughts of a comeback when A.J. Lizama, Frank Nakamura, Harry Nakamura, Bill Sanchez, and Ayuyu all crossed home plate to end the game via the 10-run mercy rule in the fifth inning. Frank Nakamura registered his second homerun that inning that also gave Pues OK 4Nate four jacks in the game.

Winning manager Franklin Lizama congratulated his players for the win.

"We did our job. We got on base and used our four homeruns wisely," he said.

Lizama said they were also fortunate that Pangelinan controlled the Angels' batters with his superb performance from the mound.

"Plus we did good on defense. We were happy he was able to find his strike zone early in the game," he said.

Angels manager Nish Mario said despite the blowout loss, she's still confident in her team's ability to bounce back in the loser's bracket.

"Although we got our first loss last night, I'm confident that Team Angels are ready to fight our way in the loser's bracket to make it back up to the top. We never look at it as a loss but more of a learning experience. Whether we're down by 10 or up by 20, you'll always see Team Angels smiling. All for the love of the game!" she said.

Mario also sent a shout-out to the team's sponsors, namely Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan), A.J. Murig, and Marianas Inflatables. "Thank you all for allowing Team Angels the opportunity to play in the King of the Diamond."

The two other games Thursday night also finished via the 10-run mercy rule. Kliq wiped the floor clean of the Blazers, 16-2, while Alapatiw spanked Sufa, 15-2.

Prizes for the King of the Diamond Labor Day Softball Tournament is $1,000 plus a set of 12 uniforms for first place, $750 for second place, $500 for third place, and $350 for fourth place. It is sponsored by Budweiser, Saipan Select, All-Star Sporting Goods, Power 99, and *Marianas Variety*. For more information on the Roil Soil Marketing event, call Ikluk Masayos at 287-7979 or Shayne Villanueva at 285-4269.

Jaguars have college feel amid Meyer's methods, missteps

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—Urban Meyer arrives at Jaguars practice long before anyone else. He has a drink in one hand and an energy shot in his back pocket as he leisurely strolls around the perimeter of Jacksonville's three fields.

It's the last break Meyer gets for several hours.

He finishes his lap, tosses his cup in the trash and then slams the energy drink before mingling with players. When the emcee (more on that later) calls for the workout to start, Meyer gets busy. He bounces from position group to position group, often jumping in to teach a technique or demonstrate the proper hand/foot placement. He has a whistle hanging from his lips and sweat dripping from his long-sleeved shirt. The tempo is as intense as Florida's sweltering summer heat. Meyer never strays too far from the middle of the action, either.

It's his first NFL season – evidenced by continued missteps – and his first taste of real football since the end of the 2018 season. It's what he knows. It's what he loves. It's what he does best.

And he's running the Jaguars much like he did his successful college programs: Bowling Green, Utah, Florida and Ohio State.

He asks players to jog onto the practice field. He puts guys in competitive situations every chance he gets.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	84	48	.636	–
New York	76	56	.576	8
Boston	75	59	.560	10
Toronto	69	62	.527	14½
Baltimore	41	90	.313	42½

Central Division

Chicago	77	56	.579	–
Cleveland	65	64	.504	10
Detroit	62	71	.466	15
Kansas City	59	72	.450	17
Minnesota	58	74	.439	18½

West Division

Houston	78	54	.591	–
Oakland	73	59	.553	5
Seattle	71	62	.534	7½
Los Angeles	66	67	.496	12½
Texas	47	85	.356	31

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Atlanta	70	61	.534	–
Philadelphia	68	64	.515	2½
New York	65	67	.492	5½
Washington	55	76	.420	15
Miami	55	78	.414	16

Central Division

Milwaukee	81	52	.609	–
Cincinnati	71	62	.534	10
St. Louis	67	63	.515	12½
Chicago	58	75	.436	23
Pittsburgh	48	84	.364	32½

West Division

San Francisco	84	48	.636	–
Los Angeles	84	49	.632	½
San Diego	71	62	.534	13½
Colorado	60	72	.455	24
Arizona	44	90	.328	41

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paire FC shuts down Kanoa FC in MSL

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Paire Football Club stretched its winning streak to five following a rout of Kanoa Football Club, 6-0, during their game in the Marianas Soccer League Summer Season last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Philip Megino and Eric Barajas delivered two goals apiece for Paire, while Jireh Yobech and Travis Spaeth contributed one apiece. Megino scored the first goal for Paire in the 14th minute and also closed out for the team with his second one recorded in the 85th. Barajas got his pair of goals in back-to-back fashion as he found the back of the net in the 29th and 36th minute, while Yobech and Spaeth scored in the 41st and 51st minute, respectively.

With the lopsided win, Paire (5-0-0 win-draw-loss) remained on top of the team standings, while Kanoa is in fourth place of the six-team field. Kanoa, before bowing to Paire, came from a similar shutout win over the Old B Bank last week.

Five different players hit the board for Kanoa with Anthony Bergancia scoring first with his goal in the 24th minute. Andruw Omelau also made his shot in the second half (42nd minute), while Ruselle Zapanta, Ruben Guerrero, and Leland Deleon Guerrero all made their goals late in the second half. Zapanta got his in the 72nd minute, Guerrero followed three minutes later, while Deleon Guerrero wrapped it up for Kanoa in the 87th.

In other results in MSL, Tan-

Paire Football Club's Whit Altizer, left, receives a pass from a teammate during their game against Kanoa Football Club in the Marianas Soccer League Summer Season last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Holdings notched win No. 3 after defeating MP United, 2-0.

Brandon Tenorio and Zhe Xiong Li teamed up in the victory with the former nailing his goal in the 19th minute and the latter in the 67th.

MSL 2
Saipan United 3, Shirley's FC 1

Saipan United kept the top spot in the MSL 2 after downing Shirley's Football Club.

Michael Devanna starred in the win, as he knocked in all the three goals for Saipan United, which improved its record to 4-0-1. Devanna logged his first goal in the 13th minute and the last two in the 50th and 51st.

Shirley's, which has only one win so far after five games this season, got its lone goal from Risty Vergara.

Bangladesh Youth 3, NMI WNT 1

Bangladesh Youth (3-2-0) continues to lurk behind Saipan United after beating the NMI Women's National Team in the other match last Friday.

Mohammad Bappi Islam, Majarul Islam, and Hemil Bapari scored for Bangladesh Youth, which now has a 3-2-0, just a win behind Saipan United.

The NMI WNT had an own goal to avoid a shutout loss.

Matansa 1, Bangladesh FC 1

In the first MSL game last Sunday, Matansa forced Bangladesh FC to a draw.

Justin Weaver made the equalizer for Matansa in the 54th minute, while Rakib Hassan registered the lone goal for Bangladesh in the 11th.

The One FC 2, Island Star 1

The One FC notched its second win this season after outclassing Island Star.

Guang Ming Xu drilled the go-ahead in the 65 th minute, while The One FC had an own goal in the 29th. Earlier in the sixth minute, Zhi Peng Lin scored for Island Star.

Santos is Fil-Taga August Ace

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Ronnie Santos topped the Fil-Taga Golfers Association Ace of the Month Tournament held last Saturday, Aug. 28, at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Course in Obyan.

The 59-year-old golfer fired a net 68 to win the monthly championship. He started out strong with a gross of 4-over 40 in the first nine holes before shooting an 8-over 44 in the back nine. He wound up with a gross of 12-over 84, which minus his 16 handicap, gave him the net score to beat for the August ace.

The Taytay, Rizal in the Philippines native, who has been playing golf for 15 years, said he won the tournament last Saturday because his swing was working fairly well despite the strong winds.

Tony Cabrera finished second with a net score of 73 built around a 46-47 in the front and back nines for a gross of 95. The 22-handicapper actually finished tied with Dan Ganacias but beat the latter in a scorecard tiebreak. Ganacias scored his net 73 on a 40 in the first nine holes before firing a 43 in the back nine for a gross of 83.

Lito Mendoza (net 79), Ed Varias (net 80), Ruben Avendaño (net 82), Jess Yumul (net 85), Bert Suda (gross 95), and Father Albert Pellazar (gross 105) also took part in the monthly tournament of Fil-Taga.

With the win in the August Ace, Santos joins Henry Bautista (January), Dan Ganacias (February), Eli Buenaventura (March), Cabrera (April), William Retardo (May), Mendoza (June), and Avendaño (July) for the yearend Fil-Taga Ace Tournament.

In the par 3 competition, Avendaño was without peer in holes No. 3 and 12, Varias beat all comers in hole No. 7, and Santos won in hole No. 14.

Ronnie Santos, seen here in a file photo, won the Fil-Taga Golfers Association Ace of the Month Tournament held last Saturday, Aug. 28, at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Course in Obyan. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MRA to hold Labor Day Race this Sunday

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

After going on hibernation for more than a month, the Marianas Racing Association is back and will be holding its Labor Day Race this Sunday, Sept. 5, at the Cowtown Raceway Park in Marpi.

MRA president Charles Cepeda they decided to hold a race this Labor Day to get the members together after a break from their points series.

"The race is for current members and for those who have joined our club recently. It's a way to welcome new members into MRA and to Cowtown with the experience of a race day atmosphere. The Labor Day Race will keep the momentum of our members who have greatly improved in their skills of motocross riding from last season and to bring them to the next level," he said.

Cepeda said this Sunday's race could certainly be an annual event on Labor Day Race weekend. "We shall gauge the outcome of racers and fans this weekend."

A change from MRA's point series is that this weekend's Labor Day Race will now feature a Beginners Class, which the MRA board added to give up-and-coming motocross enthusiasts an opportunity to test and measure their skills from all the practice rides they have been doing.

Marianas Racing Association president Charles Cepeda said they decided to hold its Labor Day Race this Sunday to welcome new members into MRA and to the Cowtown Raceway Park in Marpi. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"We didn't want to discourage them by inserting them with those who have participated in last season's points series races. We welcome riders that understand their skill level is not at the same level as those who have raced the whole seven race points last year. These can be members who just recently started practicing at Cowtown to those who may have participated not more than two races last season and feel their skills require a few more experience. It could also be motocross riders from the past who have not raced in last year's points series at Cowtown but want to give it a try, they too can join. The board will monitor those who register in the Beginners Class," said Cepeda.

MRA rules state that in order to have a class there must be at least three racers registered. "We anticipate to have the minimum in the three—Beginners Class, Power-Puff, Big Boys ATV, and Big Bikes," he added.

Included in the Labor Day Race will be the Mud Bug and Rock Crawling exhibitions from the Off Road Association. MRA invites off road enthusiast to come out to Cowtown and try out the mud pits and rock crawling lanes. MRA looks forward to the growth of its off road membership providing additional entertainment to the fans.

The MRA Labor Day Race is sponsored by Monster Energy Drink, YCO Hardware True Value, 4EVER CNMI, Ina's Kitchen, and the Marianas Visitors Authority. If anyone is interested in becoming a member or participating in our race events, they may contact any of the MRA board members or call Cuki Alvarez 483-4662.

Paire FC shuts down Kanoa FC in MSL

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Sports

Brewers knock Giants from top spot in NL, win fourth in row

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Saipan to host Oceania weightlifting champs

» To run concurrent with Mini Games

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Oceania Senior Weightlifting Championships will be held on Saipan next year and will run at the same time as the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games.

CNMI Weightlifting president John Davis confirmed that the 2021 Oceania Senior Weightlifting Championships is now scheduled to take place concurrently with the Pacific Mini Games. He said the Pacific Games Council approved Oceania Weightlifting Federation's request to hold their regional championships simultaneously with the Mini Games last July 2.

"We expect elite world-class and Olympic athletes from Australia, Samoa, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Nauru to name a few. The senior contests are open to athletes 15 years and older in 10 weight categories each for males and women. This certainly will raise the CNMI's profile in the regional and international sports community," he said in an email to *Saipan Tribune*.

Antonette T. Labausa topped the women's division of the Northern Marianas Cup Weightlifting Tournament held in March 2021 at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

Pacific Games Council CEO Andrew Minogue said having the Oceania Championships coincide with the Mini Games next year will be the third time both events will be held at the same time.

"Australia and New Zealand have been invited to all Pacific Games weightlifting events since Port Moresby 2015 (including Vanuatu 2017 Mini Games and Samoa 2019 Pacific Games), the Oceania Weightlifting Federation applied to PGC to have the event recognized as their Oceania Championships. That way, OWF does not need to organize a separate event at a different time and place, and we maximize the participants at the Pacific Games which adds to the prestige of the Games. There are no extra costs or competition days required," he said.

The two-in-one format for the sport was welcome news not only for Davis and Minogue but also for Pacific Mini Games 2022 Organizing Committee CEO Vicente "Ben" Babauta.

"Weightlifting will be very big as it'll be a two-event format event. We will have the Pacific Mini Games weightlifting competition along with

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4 named athletes of the month

Galvez | Sapong | Dela Cruz | Bucalig

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Andreau Galvez of badminton and Zarinae Sapong of athletics were hailed athletes of the month, while Fiona Bucalig of basketball and Cristobal "Leon" Dela Cruz of athletics were named students athletes of the month by the Northern Marianas Sports Association for June.

Galvez, June NMSA Male Athlete of the Month, is the team captain of the Shirley's Badminton Club which ruled the TanHoldings Badminton Team Tournament 2021 held last June 11 and 12.

He partnered with five different players in the mixed doubles and men's and women's doubles events. He played with four of them for the first time and, though it was a challenge to know each other's game, through Galvez's leadership and experience, he was able to lead his teammates to victories.

Galvez finished the competition unbeaten and was the only player in the tournament to earn a perfect 5-0 record. He also was among the volunteer coaches that conducted a series of badminton clinics through the Shuttle Time Program at various schools in June.

The Northern Marianas Badminton Association director brought badminton to students at Green Meadow School, Mt. Carmel School, Marianas High School, Saipan Community

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Pues OK 4Nate run-rules Angels

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Pues OK 4Nate won its second straight game after a 13-3 mercy rule victory over Angels in the King of the Diamond Labor Day Softball Tournament last Wednesday night at the Capitol Hill Ballfield.

The team started out with bang, scoring five runs in the first inning with two of its players—Frank Nakamura and Ban Ayuyu—going yard. Angels retaliated with a lone score in the second inning, courtesy of a homerun by Dung Maratita.

Leading, 5-1, Pues OK 4Nate widened their advantage in the third inning after Nakamura got on base and Harry Nakamura brought him home with another homerun.

Only Kobe Lifoifoi made it to base in the fourth inning for the Angels as Pues OK 4Nate's Ben

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Pues OK 4Nate's Angel Palacios and Angels' Willow Quitugua intently look at the batter in the fourth inning of their King of the Diamond Labor Day Softball Tournament last Wednesday night at the Capitol Hill Ballfield. MARK RABAGO